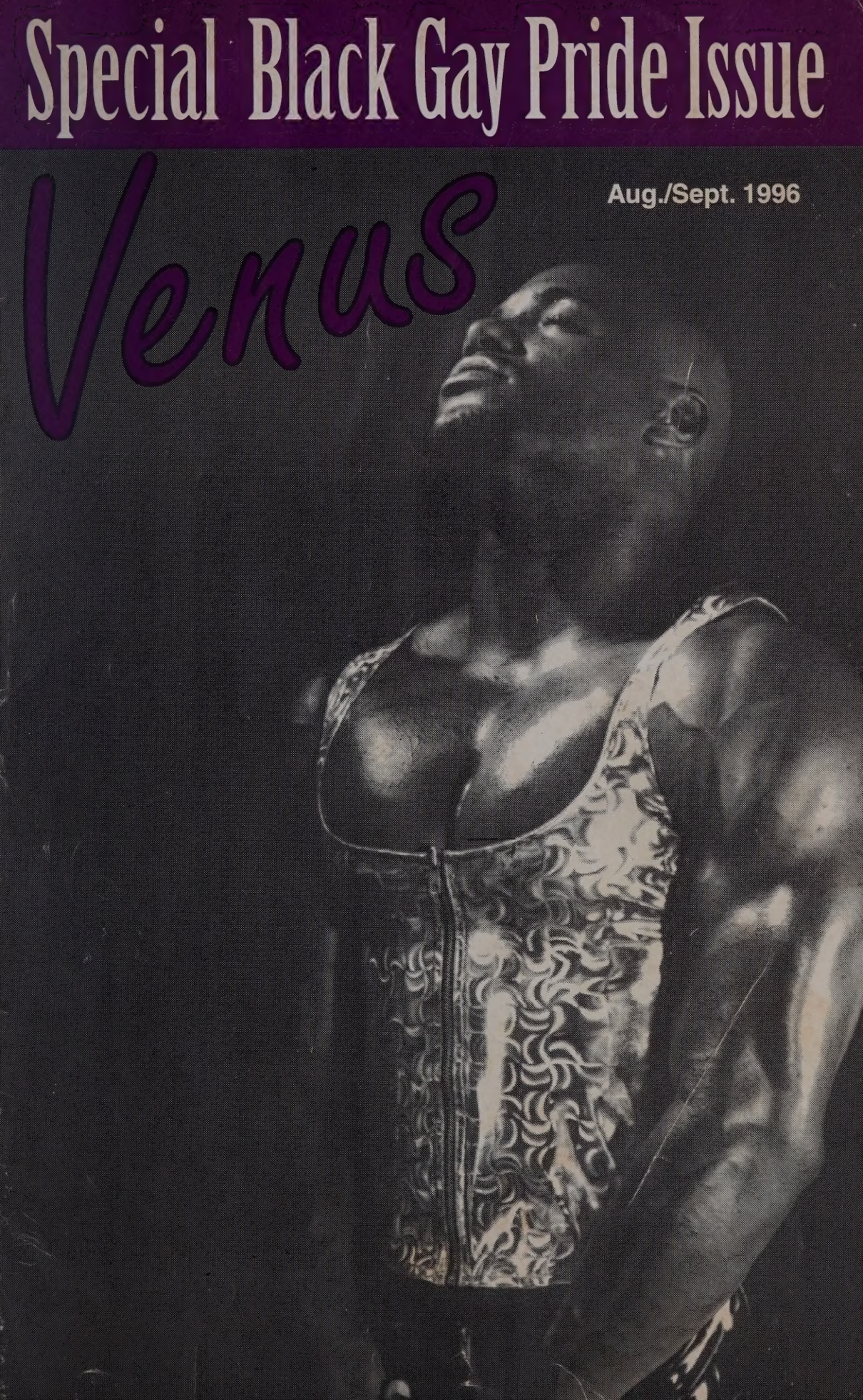
Special Black Gay Pride Issue

Venus

Aug./Sept. 1996



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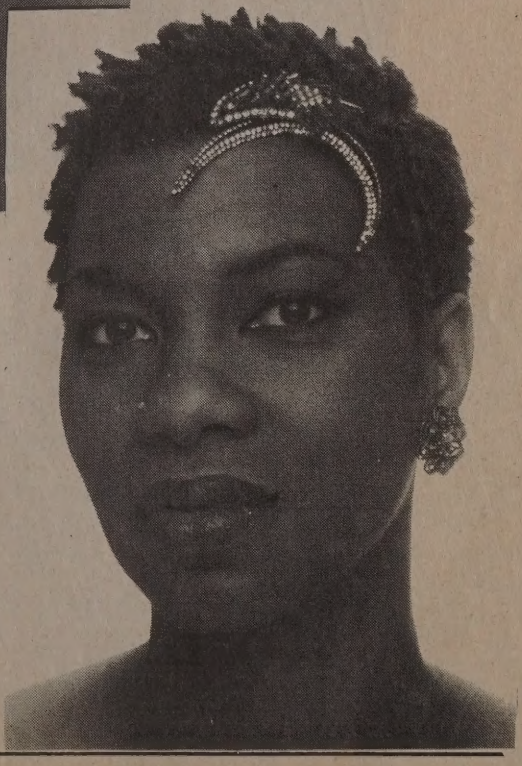

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call Second Sunday's voicemail for more information and tickets

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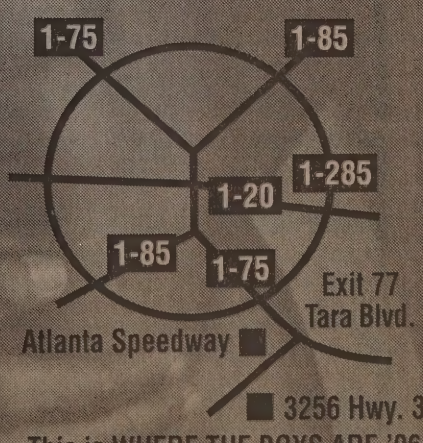
- Take 1-75 South to Exit 77 (Tara Boulevard)
- Take Tara Blvd. approximately 17 miles
- See Atlanta Motor Speedway on the right
- Continue 1.5 miles
- Pass Sweeties Flea Market on right
- Make next U-Turn from opening on the road
- See 2517 mailbox on the right
- Make a right into driveway
- Proceed to the second house: 3256 Hwy. 3



This is WHERE THE BOYS ARE '96

Get Your Life

August 30 — September 2

IN THE LIFE

ATLANTA

"Celebrating the Black Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Community"

Itinerary

Thursday	*August 29, 1996*	*Kick Off Reception*
Friday	*August 30, 1996*	*Welcome Reception*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Cultural Arts Festival*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Candlelight Vigil*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Venus Magazine sponsored Black Lesbian/Gay Ball*
Sunday	*September 1, 1996*	*Family Reunion Picnic*

Accommodations

coordinated by Venus Magazine

**Holiday Inn Airport*
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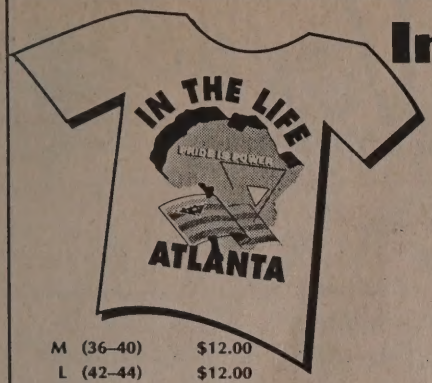
**Host Hotel*

ITLA Pride Line 404-872-6410 • Fax 404-874-1024
6065 Roswell Rd. NE Ste. 2232 • Atlanta, Georgia 30328



In The Life Atlanta

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR

I read your article "My Body-My Temple," (July 1996), and was quite impressed with your frankness and determination. It seemed like you showed 'tough love' for your people. This is a good thing. I'm now working toward becoming a vegetarian, but I'm having a hard time kicking the coffee habit. I guess my addiction to caffeine is stronger than my will to stop.

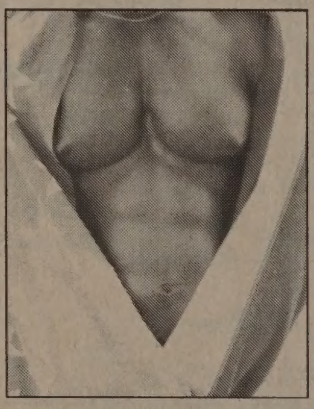
R.J.
Atlanta

DEAR EDITOR

Thank you for the story on the church burnings, "Where will These Fires Lead Us?,"(July 1996). The article truly helped me to step back and place things into perspective. The concept of the burnings symbolizing the "pushing back" of Americans unwilling to accept diversity or change is interesting.

Toby Taylor
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR



Let me take a moment to commend you on your great cover photo on the July issue. Not only was it creative, but it represented the natural sculptured beauty of the African-American woman. Great job!

Robin Joy
Atlanta

Sorry Robin! The model on the July cover is a man! Don't feel bad, girl! Every woman in the City thought the image was a female's body.

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

July 1996
Vol. 2., No. 7

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COVER SHOT
TONY
by Jena P. Jones

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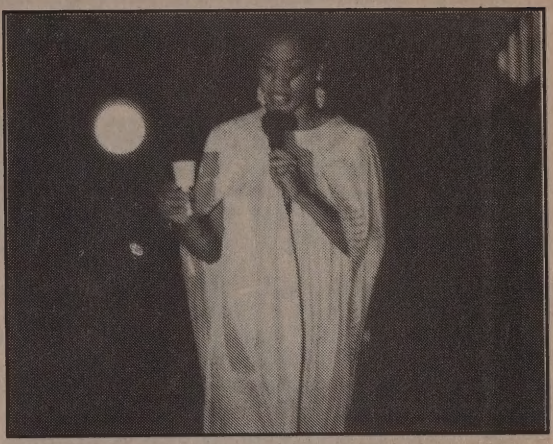

I SAID YES!

The Perry Watkins Story!!

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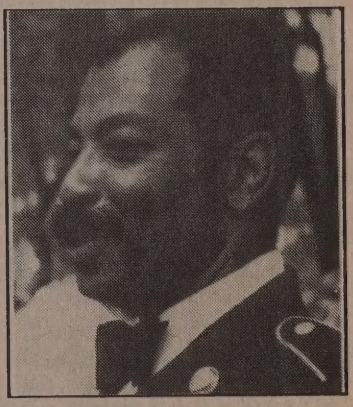

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Photo by Ron Singleton

Venus™ MAGAZINE

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Holiday Inn Airport

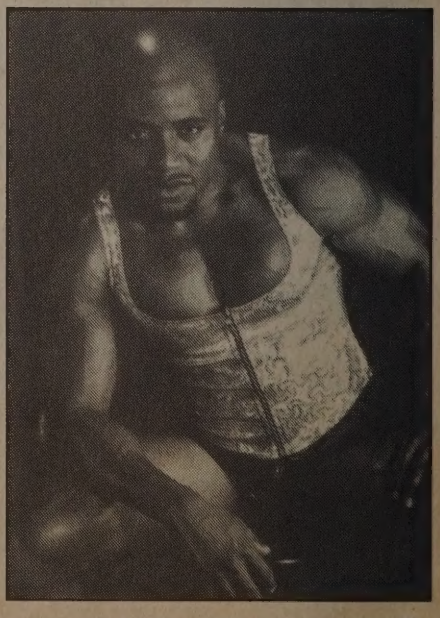

photo by Jena P. Jones

All Venus Events are held at the Host Hotel, Holday Inn Airport:
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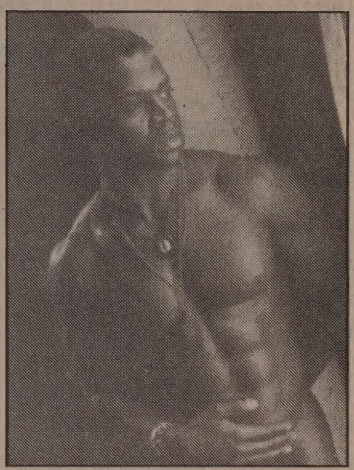
Code Word - "Black Pride"

H O S T S

Black Gay Pride!

"WHO HE?"



He's your cover man on Venus! July issue without the flag! Photo-journalist Warren O. Fletcher opens his "Who He?" exhibit on Friday August 30, 6 p.m. ***Holiday Inn Airport***

HOW TO FIND THAT SPECIAL MAN

Relationship Therapist, Ulester Douglas, MSW, facilitates this dynamic ***FREE*** workshop for Brothers only. • ***Holiday Inn Airport*** Saturday August 31, 12 noon - 1:30 p.m.

BUTCH IN THE STREETS, FEMME IN THE SHEETS

Corporate Trainer and author, Joan Fountain, facilitates an open discussion exploring lesbian sexuality. A real gender-bender for sisters only. ***FREE!*** ***Holiday Inn Airport*** Sat. August 31, 2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Ask Marian

New York Advice columnist, Marian Farrah, has joined the Venus Family!! From London to Trinidad, from Canada to Detroit, Marian has lived, seen and heard it all! So when you have questions about relationships, whether they be about love, friendship, family, coming out, your job, sex or the lack of sex, just do what we do...Ask Marian!

PHOTOGRAPHY: JENA P. JONES

Dear Marian,

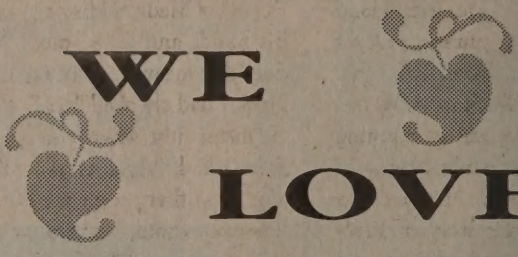
I am a 40 year-old professional who's caught in between a rock and a hard place. I thought I was secure with my homosexuality. However my partner is becoming more publicly seen and known. I want to support all he does, but I get these feelings of reluctance and decline some of his invitations to participate in "the causes." How can I get over myself and really become liberated?

Dear Almost Comfortably Out,

You have clearly come out to yourself and are comfortable with your partner in your private life. But being "out" in public can feel like coming out all over again, each time. What was it like for you when you first came out to yourself? How does your homosexuality affect your relationships with your family and friends? Painful experiences such as loss of esteem, rejection or non-acceptance from people you care about can affect the way you feel about your homosexuality. How can you become liberated? By accepting yourself unconditionally. We are all exposed from an early age to negative attitudes and ignorance about homosexuality. These attitudes come from the very places we rely on to learn about ourselves and the world. We need to unlearn these untruths. You don't need to "get over yourself," you need to heal from the internalized homophobia that is a part of our every day diet. The first step is to recognize it. The second step is to validate yourself. Break the isolation and talk to others in the life about your struggles. Surround yourself with affirming images of gay life through as many mediums as possible: books, performance, art and journal writing. Your self-liberation will be a process that you will repeat for the rest of your life.

If you have a question for Marian just drop her a line at: E-mail: Venusmag1@aol.com or write ASK MARIAN-VENUS MAGAZINE P.O. Box 89238 Atlanta, GA 30312

Venus Hits the Internet



We need to hear from you!! Your letters to the Editor are always welcome and needed. Whether you love us, hate us or simply want to respond to an article, send us more mail!

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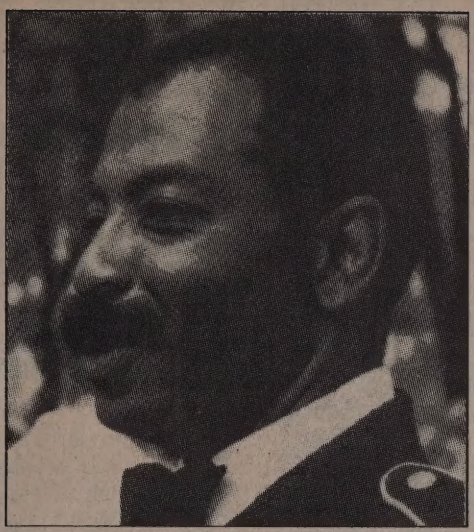

"I SERVED WITH PRIDE, HONOR AND DISTINCTION, FROM INDUCTION TO RETIREMENT. AN AFRICAN AMERICAN, WHO IS HOMOSEXUAL. I AM NOT THE FIRST TO DO SO AND THERE IS NO REASON I SHOULD BE THE LAST. QUITE LIKE THE RUNNER WHO BROKE THE FOUR MINUTE MILE, TO IMPROVE ON HIS EFFORT, THE SUCCESSFUL ONES STUDIED HIS TECHNIQUES."

Perry J. Watkins Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army (Retired) in a letter to President Clinton

by Morgan Gwenwald

Before we ever heard that phrase "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Sgt. Perry Watkins was not only telling, he was performing regular drag acts while serving in the U. S. Army. Despite his recent death, the story of Perry Watkins and his struggle with the U.S. Government lives on as one of the most remarkable chapters in our fight for inclusion in the military.

Perry was drafted into the Army in 1968 at the height of the Vietnam war. On his official forms he checked the box "yes" in acknowledgement of his homosexual tendencies. He described his enlistment experience: as the examining physician held my Report of Medical History form in his hands and asked me, "What does this mean?" pointing to the block I had checked "yes." I said, "It means just what it says." He then asked, "And what is that?" With six other people present and listening, I said, "It means that I am homosexual." I made my statement with pride and dignity without shame or fear. I was immediately sent to an Army psychiatrist, who believed humiliation was part of the evaluation process. I was asked about sexual conduct, and acknowledged both oral and anal activity... I was ultimately found qualified for service and drafted in May of 1968.

Perry went on to negotiate his way of serving with pride and professionalism, being open about his sexuality to the chain of command and his fellow soldiers, and demanding the same respect and protection afforded all soldiers. He re-enlisted several times and served successfully for the next fourteen years. Within that time he also performed for the Army as "Simone," his drag persona.

Then in 1982 the Department of Defense issued a directive dictating "homosexuality incompatible with military service," and claiming it undermined discipline, good order, and morale. At this period the Army moved to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Pocket Guide

Host Hotel Holiday Inn Airport 404-762-8411, code for special rate, "Black Pride"

Tuesday Aug. 27

ADODI MUSE-TONY DANIELS' ONE MAN SHOW

-Miles To Go Before I Sleep. Gay and Lesbian Visitor's Center. 1374 W. Peachtree St, 8pm, $5.00

Thursday Aug. 29

IN THE LIFE ATLANTA,(ITLA)

Kick off reception, call Pride line for time, location and tickets at 404 872-6410.

Friday Aug. 30

ITLA -WELCOME RECEPTION

6 pm-9 pm Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave, 85 south ,exit 19: Speakers Dr. Sylvia Rhue and Keith Boykin. Call Pride line for tickets. 404-872-6410

VENUS-PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT "WHO HE?"

by Atlanta photojournalist Warren O. Williams, opening 6 pm., Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 South, exit 19, Free.

VENUS-OFFICIAL WOMENS ICE BREAKER

9 pm-2 Am Holiday Inn Airport 1380 Virginia Ave, 85 South, exit 19: $7

Saturday Aug. 31

ITLA- CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL

11 am-6 pm, call Pride line for location and tickets at 404-872-6410. Showing 'All God's Children' co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue.

VENUS-SHOWING THE PERRY WATKINS STORY

2 pm, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 South, exit 19, Free.

VENUS-FOR BROTHERS ONLY

12 noon-1:30 pm, Workshop on "Finding and Keeping that Special Man" Facilitator, Ulester Douglas MSW, relationship therapist. Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19 , Free.

VENUS-FOR SISTERS ONLY

2 pm-3:30 pm, Open Discussion explores Lesbian sexuality, "Butch in the Streets, Femme in the sheets and vice-verse" and "Why are male identified black lesbians the least accepted in black gay culture" Facilitated by Joan Fountain, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19, Free.

BLACKOUT-HOTLANTA '96

Black Pride Bash, 2 pm-8pm, Williamsberg Estates, Sir Henry Street, South West Atlanta, free food, cash bar, $5 call for directions 404-629-9879.

B.W.M.T. ATLANTA-SUMMER BASH 1996

Pool party plunge #2. Food provided (cookout). Fun begins @ 2:30 p.m. Call Tony and Tray for details @ 404-609-9773. 738 Hill St. SE (Grant Park)

SECOND SUNDAY-WHERE THE BOYS ARE '96

3 pm-10 pm, 3256 Hwy 3; lake, entertainment, Jacuzzi, music, food, games, $10 , call for directions 404-325-7321.

ITLA -CANDLELIGHT AIDS AND BREAST CANCER VIGIL

7 pm ,Howell Park-West End, Ralph David Abernathy Blvd.

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The Mansion, Piedmont @ North Ave., $12 adv/$15 door. (404) 755-2684

VENUS- BLACK GAY PRIDE BALL

Grand Ballroom, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19, Festive Attire, $10 door, cash bar, hot music and entertainment.

Sunday Sept. 1

ITLA- FAMILY REUNION PICNIC

Perkerson Park South West Atlanta, 11 am-dusk, Free, call Pride line for directions. 404-872-6410.

From The Editor

What a difference a year makes!

Atlanta's Black gay and lesbian community has grown in monumental proportions over the past 2 years, but these last 12 months has been phenomenal. There exist for the first time a REAL sense of community, meaning that people and organizations really do care about one another.

Organizations like Second Sunday , a discussion group for black gay men and Zami, a support group for black lesbians have held joint steering committee meetings to learn more about one another. Although both groups have exited independently for years, the need to share knowledge and information about 'what it's like to be a black lesbian or gay man in Atlanta' has proven to become necessary. Why is this sharing of knowledge necessary? Because we do not have a choice in the matter, we MUST work together and we must get over our stereotypes of each other in order to best communicate. The brothers had a chance to learn that all black lesbians are not 'militant man haters' and the Sisters have learned that all gay men are not 'sissies with attitudes'.

Speaking of working together, our social organizations, once rivals, are now pooling their resources to get the word out about their various events. Our AIDS organizations are getting more financial and volunteer help from black gays and lesbians than the years before. Atlanta's black gay pride organization, In The Life Atlanta, with a handful of volunteers has planned a fabulous Labor Day weekend. Although faces have changed over the past year, the group started with nothing and now has a solid non-profit structure and is already working on next year's budget. Of course nothing happens without a bit of drama but that seems to be part of the growth process with ANY organization. To ITLA we say 'Well Done!'

As a growing community we also recognize our political strength. A sizable donation to Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney's campaign marked the first time a group of Out African-American gays and lesbians in Atlanta jointly endorsed a candidate for public office. It's only a matter of time before a political umbrella group for black gay and lesbian organizations will surface. Our community needs it and all that we need some how comes forth.

The bottom line is : the Train has finally left the station! If we as a community can stay on track, we might actually make it to the next millennium, politically and socially, 'ON-TIME'. And that's what I call BLACK GAY PRIDE.

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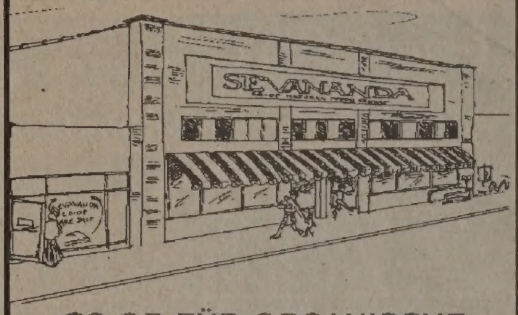

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Pride is Power!

by Charlene Cothran

Linda Villarosa, Executive Editor of Essence Magazine, is one of many to appear in Dr. Sylvia Rhue's documentary 'All God's Children,' to debut during Black Gay Pride.

The theme for In The Life Atlanta, the new organization which now produces the Atlanta's Black gay pride weekend, rings aloud with the truth about those of African Descent who are gay/lesbian/transgendered and questioning people-We Ain't Shamed and We Ain't Scared to claim all of who we are. Atlanta's Pride celebration, now in it's second organized year, will offer visitors from around the country an array of Proud and Powerful activities including a cultural arts festival featuring the Atlanta debut of "All God's Children." The film, co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue, a licensed clinical social worker and Doctor of human sexuality of Los Angeles, is a critically acclaimed documentary which deals head on with the effects of homophobia on African-Americans, particularly

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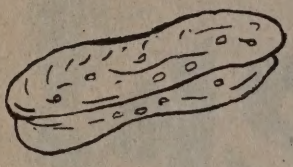

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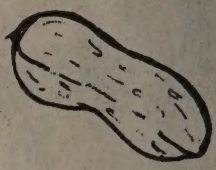

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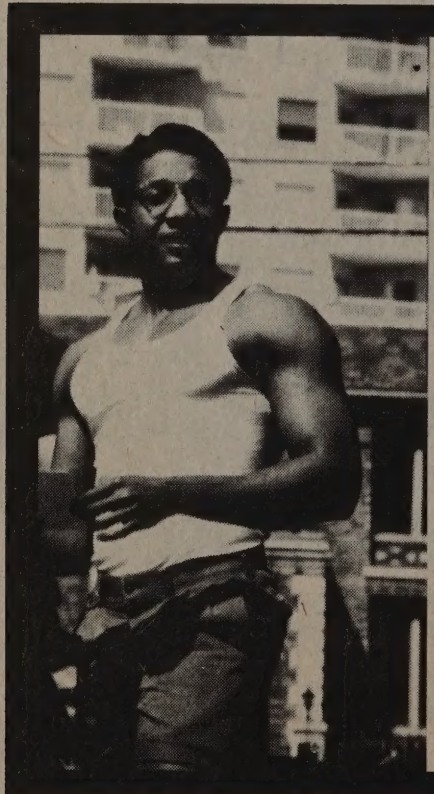

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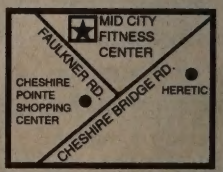

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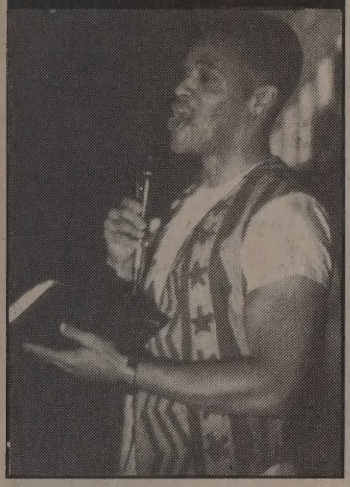

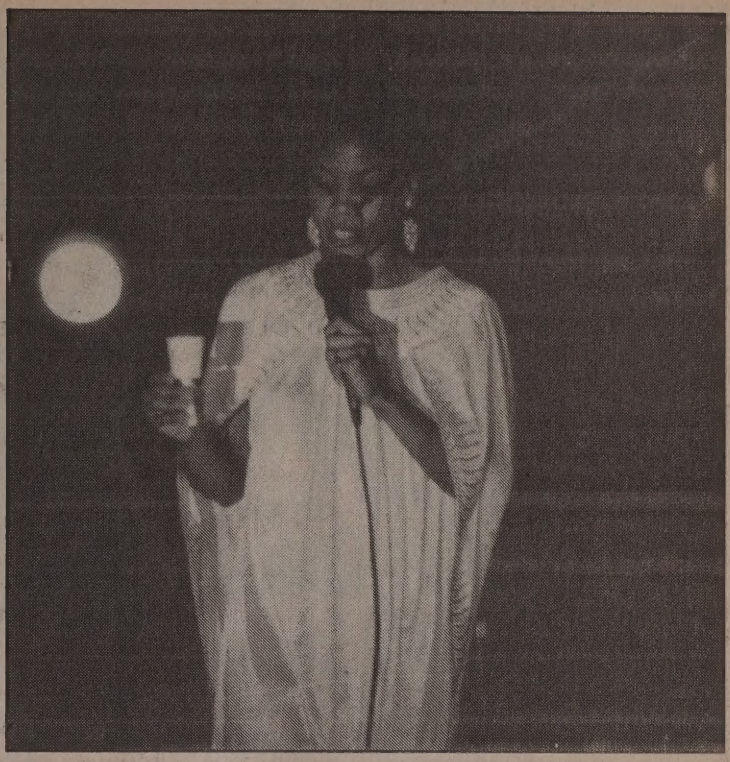

Atlanta actress J. Karen Thomas, right, accompanied by Stewart, performed at last years Candlelight AIDS Memorial.

on African-American Churchgoers. Check your pride guide for time and location.

The story of the life of Perry Watkins has also been captured on film and will be presented during the Pride festivities. Watkins, a black Sergeant First Class drafted in the U.S. Army in 1968, on his official forms checked the box 'yes' acknowledging that he was gay. The film describes his enlistment experiences and includes several scenes of drag shows he performed for the entertainment pleasure of his comrades. The film is co- produced by New York's Chiqui Cartegena, and will be shown at the host hotel, Holiday Inn Airport on Saturday Aug. 31 at 2:00 pm.

Perhaps no one captures the Pride and Power of Black men better than Atlanta photographer Warren O. Williams. In his exhibit entitled "Who He?", Williams' goal is to 'change the representation of black men in art, through documentary portraits and photojournalism.' Williams' very androgynous shot of a brother draped in the American flag appeared on the front cover Venus' July issue. The controversial cover shot provoked both raved reviews and shock as many readers were convinced that the model was a nude woman. The exhibit will hang at the host hotel, Holiday Inn Airport on Fri. and Sat. Aug. 30th and 31st.

Speaking of Pride and Power, free workshops will be held honoring the relationships of black gays and lesbians. Ulester Douglas, MSW, consultant/Imago relationship therapist will address 'How do we improve the chances of finding and keeping that special man' and 'How to get through the difficult times—the power struggles.' This session is for brothers only, from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm on Saturday at the host hotel. Seating is limited!

The ladies in the City are strongly encouraged to attend a discussion/workshop on lesbian sexuality, more specifically, 'Why a 'Butch' in the streets tends to be 'Femme' between the sheets and vice-versa' and 'Why the African-American male-identified black lesbian is the least accepted among black gay culture.' The discussion will be facilitated by Sacramento's Joan Fountain, dynamic corporate consultant

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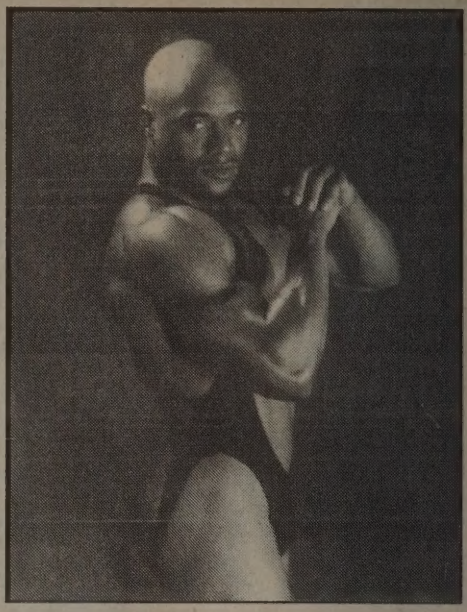

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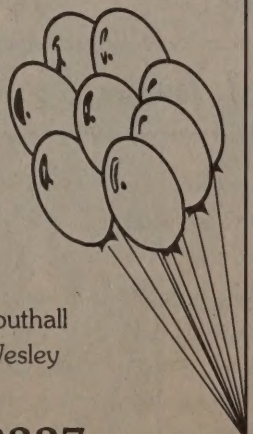

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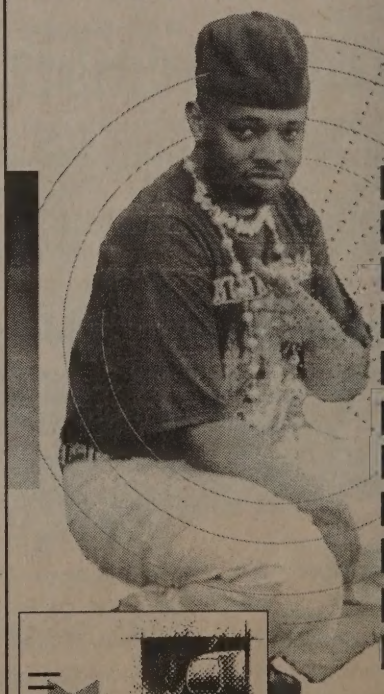

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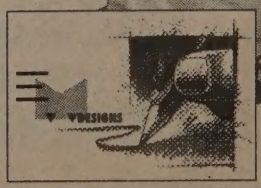

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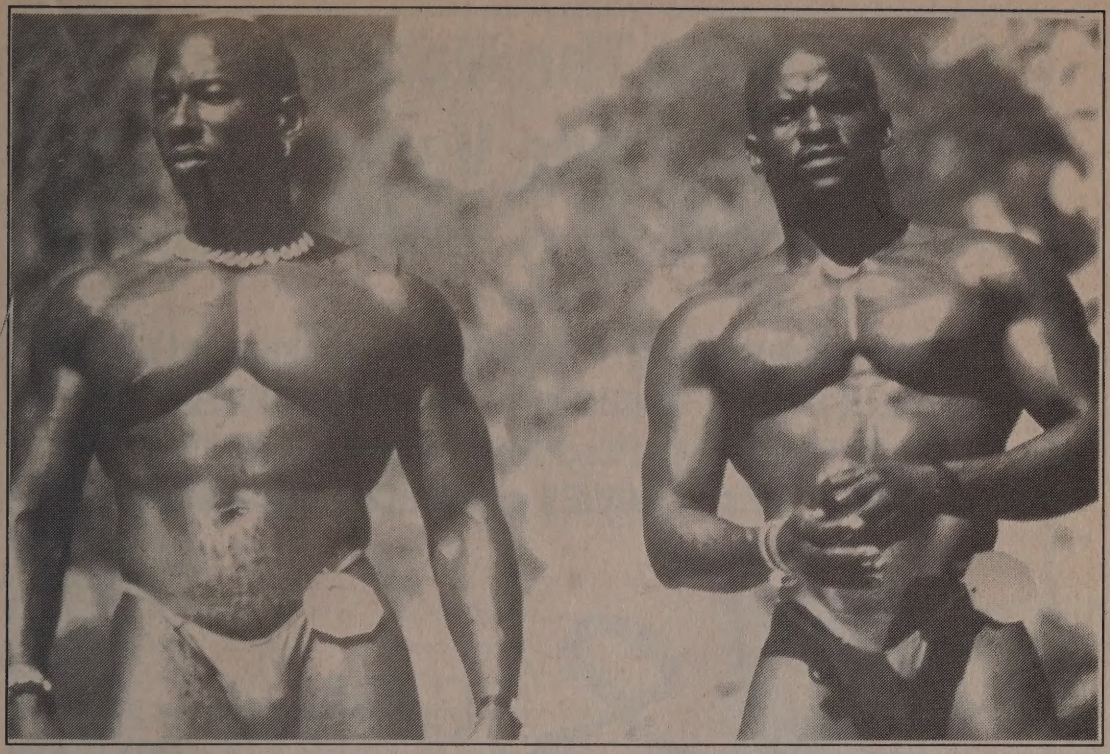

Hard Body Contestants head to Phoenix, Arizona's Black Gay Pride, DIVAS IN THE DESERT.
PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

PRIDE IS POWER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

and author of an autobiography 'Don't Get me Started!'

The Official Women's Ice Breaker will immediately follow ITLA's Welcome reception at the Holiday Inn Airport's main Ballroom from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Meet gorgeous women from all over the world at this 'getting-to-know-you' party.

What ever you do, DON'T MISS the Black Gay Ball on Saturday night! Doors open at 11 pm at the main Ballroom, Trust that Atlanta WILL NOT be the same the next morning! With hot music and dancing, Festive Attire, and great entertainment, we promise to keep you screaming and dancing all night!

What would Black Gay Pride be without a Picnic? In classic southern style ITLA's Family Reunion in Perkerson Park will close the weekend of celebration. Enjoy great food, vendors, games and music while making plans to attend the next two black gay Pride Celebrations! That's right! Just when you thought it was over, San Francisco's Bay Bash '96 enjoy's it's second year of pride and power. Over 1,500 attendees are expected at their annual opening party, followed by their Bay Bash Cabaret, the Bay Bash Barbecue and of course the Bay Bash Sunset Cruise. Scheduled for October 10-13,1996, contact event producer Andre Morgan at 415-922-5156.

Perhaps the ultimate black gay pride experience will take place in Phoenix, Arizona, Nov. 1,2,3, 1996. Divas in The Desert host it's first pride celebration with an impressive line up of activities. Some of the highlights include a welcome reception at the Ramada Hotel Camelback, a national Bid Whist Tournament, a Unity picnic at Roosevelt Dam & Lake and a Hot Body Contest -male & female divisions-featuring Atlanta's own Tony D., winner of L.A.'s At The Beach Mr. Hot Body '96. For more info call 602-978-6219.

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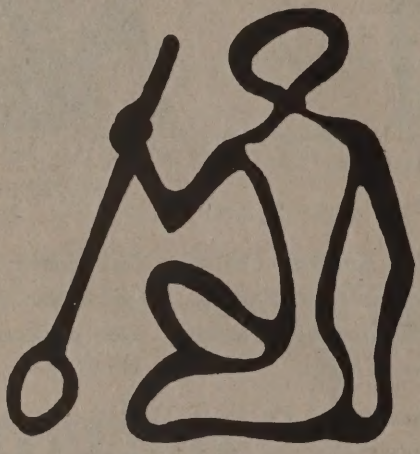

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Miles to Go Before I Sleep

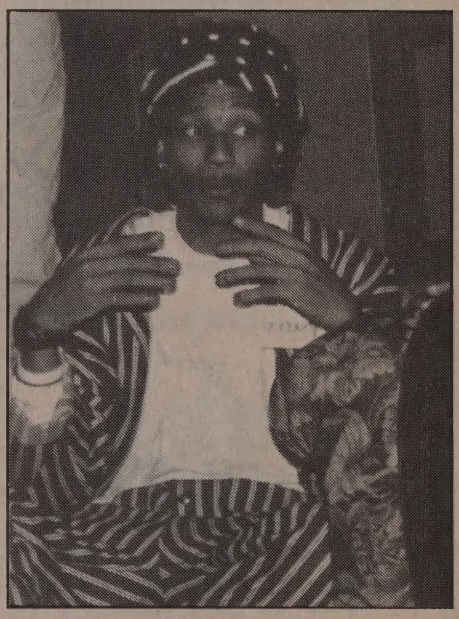
a one man show by Tony Daniels

by Duncan Teague

They stood on the steps of the church discussing the possibility of their groups working together. Her theatre troupe had recently moved south from New York. They were quickly gaining a good reputation in the Atlanta's les/gay/bi/trans community. His literary group had been in existence less than a year, and gaining exposure by performing on a regular basis. They talked briefly about their roles in this collaboration, and their excitement about this joint venture. Slated for August 27, at the Gay and Lesbian Visitors Center.

She is Sonya Hemphill, the founder and Executive Director of Think It's Not When It Is (TINWII) Inc. The troupe is dedicated to promoting positive lesbian and gay imagery in the media. Founded in 1990, TINWII, has established itself as one of the premiere lesbian theatre troupes in the country.

He is Tony Daniels, the president and a founder of The Adodi-Muse-An Outsiders Collective and a Gay Negro Ensemble, the only literary group for African-American gay and bisexual men in Atlanta. The Adodi-Muse commits it's time and energy to the telling of their individual and collective experiences, performing the work they pen and the work of others who support their survival. They hope to create the lasting presence of their stories by publishing and chronicling these words, song and poetry.



Adodi Muse's Tony Daniels performs his life story at the Gay & Lesbian Visitor's Center.

The joint venture between the two is a one "queen" performance based on a transitional period of Tony Daniels' life. The performance will cover the 11 years, from May of 1985 until the present. The first 9 years., Tony was dealing with being HIV+, and the last two have found him battling with AIDS. This is a very personal, powerful, and frank look at the deadly affects of this deadly virus. The performance piece is being called "Miles To Go Before I Sleep". Ms. Hemphill will direct and produce, The Adodi-Muse will co-produce, and Tony Daniels will make his acting debut as the character, Solomon, based on his life.

This will be the first of many performances done by an individual member of The Adodi-Muse, with the remaining members as producers. They will also continue to collaborate with the many talented artists in the community. They feel that by encouraging each member to do independent projects, they will bring back to the Muse more experiences and a renewed love for the work. You can get more information by contacting the Adodi-Muse at (404) 521-2515.

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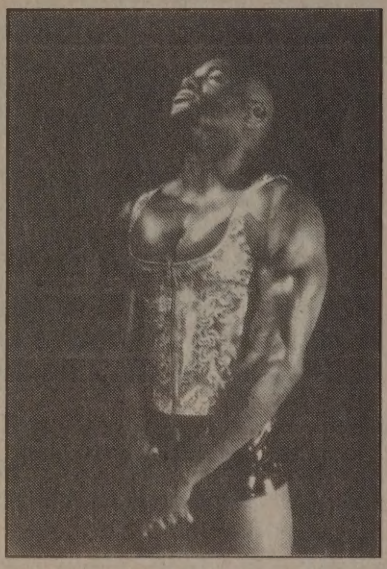

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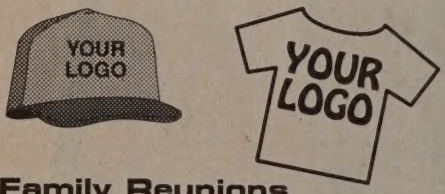

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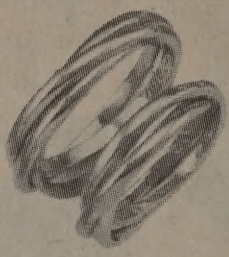

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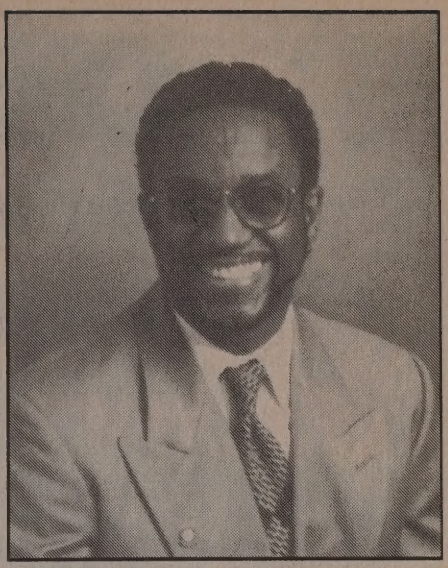
Career: . . . . . Information sciences and volunteer

Hometown: . Fort Lauderdale, FL

Latest Book:. "The Black Holocaust for Beginners" by S.E. Anderson



With inspiration from the Million Man March, foundation from BLK and support from the Broward County Library, Eric researched, and developed 'NLIGHT'N'N', published "Read and Write On!", a directory of publications by and about people of Afrikan decent In-The-Life.

Eric has been in one of four vice presidential positions of the Fort Lauderdale Branch N.A.A.C.P. for over a dozen years, is an adult literacy tutor trainer; serves on the county's literacy board, and is on Fort Lauderdale's Aviation Advisory Board.

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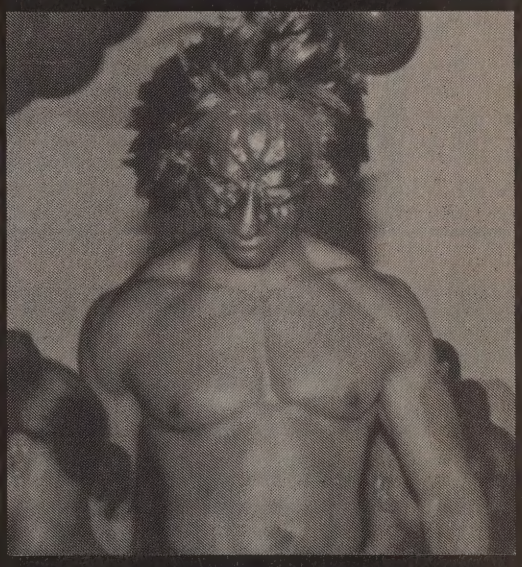

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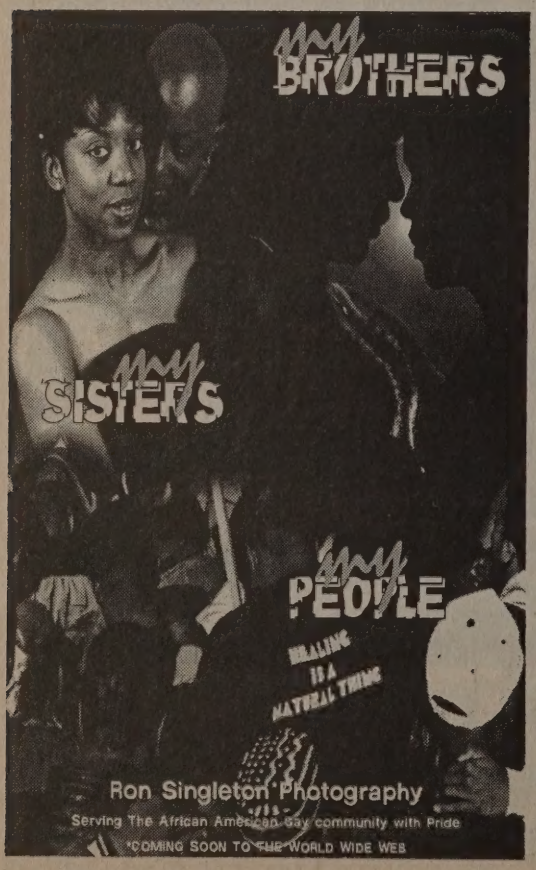
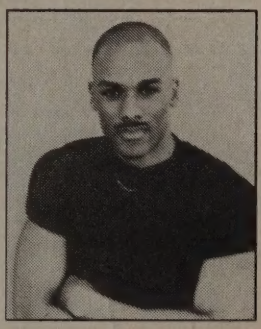


Meet the Author
Sunday, September 1 • 7:30 p.m.



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Take Control

Honorary Co-chair Senator Carol Moseley-Braun

This will be the seventh year the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals will host its annual conference. This September 13-14 over 200 members of the black gay and lesbian community will meet at the Dupont Plaza Hotel to celebrate this year's conference theme, "Take Control."

According to Rosalind Smith, Conference Co-Chair, "Take Control, is very liberating as a conference theme. It really says out loud that black lesbians and gay men are visible, and that it is our turn to grasp all of the powers that are affecting our lives."

The two day event, opens with a congressional reception on Capitol Hill. This year, Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun will serve as honorary co-chair of the event. "Last year we were very successful with the opening reception," said Everett Hamilton, Conference Co-Chair. "Mayor Marion Barry and D.C. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, were honorary co-chairs along with an honorary reception committee composed of 12 members of the Congressional Black Caucus and members of the D.C. City Council and School Board. This was the first time that an event by black lesbians and gay men had attracted that much visible support by public decision makers. That tells us that our message is starting to resonate in city hall and congressional offices."

Charisse Barsella and Frank Long have developed the Saturday conference program. The day will be filled with workshops, speakers and will close with a large group session designed to empower attendees to take control of the various situations that they encounter daily.

Workshops are divided into three tracks, Financially Speaking, Free Your Spirit and Sexual Politics. Topics range from workshops on doing business on the internet, to understanding our sexuality as revealed in sacred texts. "For too long black people have felt that homosexuality is not included in the Bible, and that we are somehow condemned. "That is false, said Barsella." "This workshop will look at all sacred text. And will show how gay men and lesbians are not only represented in the Bible, but how our creator's love is extended to all," she said.

According to Long, "I can't wait for the reaction of the audience at the workshop on "Tops and Bottoms, Femmes and Butch." Although it is a hysterical title, it really takes a serious look at how we stereotype each other and fall into a pattern of mimicking heterosexual behavior."

Wanda Alston, a self described political animal, is quick to comment, "This conference is also about politics. We will attempt to set an agenda for black lesbians and gay men. It won't be some grand document, but instead, we will define a few important issues that attendees can then return to their respective communities to act on."

The D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals is the oldest organization in the country still in existence that serves our community. Conference '96 is one of the groups annual projects. For more information about the organization or to register for Conference '96. Please call Everett Hamilton at 202-265-1428 or Rosalind Smith at 301-423-2728.

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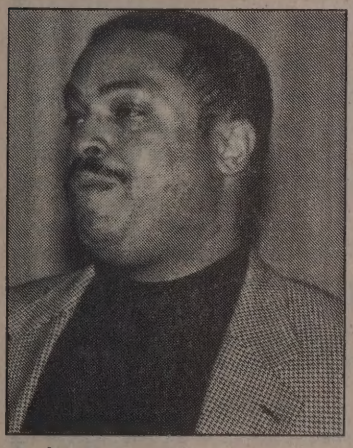
The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

A Hotter Than July Success Story

Detroit-The organizer's of Detroit's first Black gay/lesbian pride celebration have a lot to be Proud of. The action packed weekend featured non-stop fun and food. Co-produced by the renowned Billionaires Boy's Club, A Lorde Collective and The Ladies of



Author E. Lynn Harris

a Current Affair, the event felt more like the '10th annual' instead the first. (The momentum of the 8th annual BBC anniversary dinner is responsible for that!) Stanley Bennet Clay's SBC Magazine presented 'Man of the Year' Awards to several outstanding men including Kick Magazine's Curtis Lipscomb for community service; photographer, Ron Singleton for the Arts; and author E. Lynn Harris for literature.

Braves Announce AIDS Benefit "Stepping Up To The Plate for P.W.A.'s".

The Atlanta Braves have announced that the September 7th game against the New York Mets will be dedicated to those living with AIDS in the Greater Atlanta area. Prior to the game over 300 volunteers from local AIDS service organizations will form a giant human red ribbon on the field while accompanied by choral selections from the Metropolitan Community Church Choir.

Various musicians and celebrities will be on hand to assist in the pre-game festivities and the Atlanta Braves Foundation will follow with a significant contribution to Project Open Hand/Atlanta, AID/Atlanta and the Grady Infectious Disease Program's pediatric unit.

Special tickets to the September 7th game (including pre-game ceremonies) are available for $10 through Project Open Hand/Atlanta at (404) 872-8089. Two dollars of each ticket purchased through Project Open Hand will be used to continue their mission of providing two meals a day, seven days a week to about 500 Atlantans living with AIDS. Group seating is available making this an excellent opportunity for professional or service group outings. For more information contact: James Towers @ (404) 872-8089 X120, Project Open Hand/Atlanta

Black Basement Collective

Atlanta-Black Basement Collective presents Solidarity '96, an African-American festival of music, arts, crafts, food and more. Solidarity '96 will feature the BBC's diverse collection of musical genres and artistic influences. The event is a gathering of Atlanta's African-American Artisans, bridging gaps and changing structures. A collection of Funk, Rock, Reggae, Soul, Hip-Hop, Jazz and Blues, Still Life and Water Colors.

The Black Basement Collective, producers are dedicated to the perpetuation of African-American musicianship and artistic expression. We proudly stage events that utilize African-American talent, business and venues. Come and enjoy the splendor of our diverse community at the S.W.C.C.C. Amphitheater, 1444 Lucile Ave., in Historic West End. Saturday August 17,24& 31, 1996. Vendors, Musicians, and corporate sponsors wishing to be part of the series can call 404-755-3226 for more information or e-mail us at nustyl19@idt.vivid.net.

Gays Abroad

Amsterdam -The School for International Training's (SIT) Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies program successfully completed its third semester abroad in Amsterdam, the Netherlands this past May. The program, the first ever of its kind, represents a unique opportunity for students to pursue interests in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies from a European perspective.

Open to students attending colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada, SIT's program features interdisciplinary seminars on the life and culture of the Netherlands and on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. Lecturers include those

The 411, continued

from the University of Amsterdam and the University of Utrecht in addition to representatives from organizations such as the Dutch Bisexual Organization and GALA, Amsterdam. Lecture topics include

those such as: The Social Geography of the Netherlands, Public Policy as it relates to Gays and Lesbians, Gender and Ambiguity in the 19th Century, and Contemporary Lesbigay Movements in Europe.

As SIT states in its Netherlands: Academic Program Report, "Any college semester abroad program challenges students to explore their own cultural identity, but the Netherlands: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies program provides an extra push in this direction. Gay life in the Netherlands is radically different than what one experiences in the United States, and exploration of this difference challenges students to see how time and place are constructors of their individual and cultural identities. The program uses this personal understanding and motivation to spur larger, more academic areas of learning."

The program fee includes tuition, room and board, international air travel, in-country excursions, and insurance. For more information concerning the Netherlands program, please call the Admissions Office at 1-800-336-1616.

Aids Survival Project Announces LiveWell Fund

Atlanta-AIDS Survival Project (ASP) has announced the formation of the LiveWell Fund to support a diverse set of special projects and initiatives. The fund's first sponsor is Patients Pharmacy, with a $50,000 pledge over five years at Sustaining Gold Sponsorship Level. There are six levels with contributions beginning at $1,000.

ASP is an Atlanta-area AIDS Service Organization that is recognized nationally for its HIV/AIDS Treatment Resource Center, which is considered the best in the southeast United States. Operation: Survival, a two-day retreat designed to provide information and knowledge to empower those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS, is another renowned ASP program. The agency also offers peer counseling, advocacy concerning individuals and legislative issues and community programs, treatment conferences, a monthly publication, support groups, and other important educational services.

Patient's Pharmacy stepped forward aggressively to provide direct community support for AIDS services by helping to launch the LiveWell Fund and by simultaneously becoming the sole presenting sponsor of ASP's "Who's Dining Who?", a fundraising event held in September. AIDS Survival Project is a non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information write or call: Jeff Graham (or) Larry Sheldon, 828 W. Peachtree St. Suite 206, Atlanta, GA 30308; phone: (404) 874-7926 fax: (404) 872-1192

New Church Founded : Circle of Love Fellowship

Decatur-The Circle of Love Fellowship was founded and adopted by Bishop Stephanie Williams and members of C.O.L.O.R. (Coming Out Living Our Reality) on Sunday, July 7, 1996. They are located in the Memorial Bend Office Park at 778 Rays Road, Suite 108. Services begin at 10:00 a.m "While we cannot change the image the world may have of us, we can educate ourselves about the truth of our being as a spiritual entity in this universe" says Bishop Williams.

Bishop Stephanie D. Williams is a native of Baltimore, Maryland, who presently resides in Stone Mountain, GA. She is the proud mother of son. Ordained as a pastor in 1985, and consecrated into the Bishopric in 1993, Bishop Williams founded and pastored the Word of Truth Center Church, Baltimore, MD from September, 1985 to May, 1994(formerly known as Spirit of Liberty Church) an independent interdenominational church.

The Circle of Love Fellowship is a non-discriminatory, Liberationist, Metaphysical/Theological Bible-believing church with a ministry to the needs of the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgendered-Gay-friendly African-American community and people of color and of non-color.

Gay rights activists heckled out of Zimbabwe fair

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Gay rights activists abandoned their booth at Africa's biggest book fair Friday after it was besieged by fist-waving opponents trying to prevent the display of gay rights pamphlets. Roughly 100 protesters kept the activists from showing the pamphlets — which the government has called obscene — despite a second court ruling Friday in favor of the group Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe. "We don't want to turn violent, but these people are violating our rights. GALZ must be completely destroyed. They are here to rearrange the hormones of our youths," said Nixon Nyikadzino, a student.

Gay rights display destroyed

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Demonstrators destroyed Zimbabwe's first gay rights exhibit Saturday minutes after activists staffing the booth fled a jeering mob.

The government had fought to keep Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe out of Africa's biggest book fair, saying its material was obscene. The display was allowed after a judge ruled in favor of the country's only gay organization.

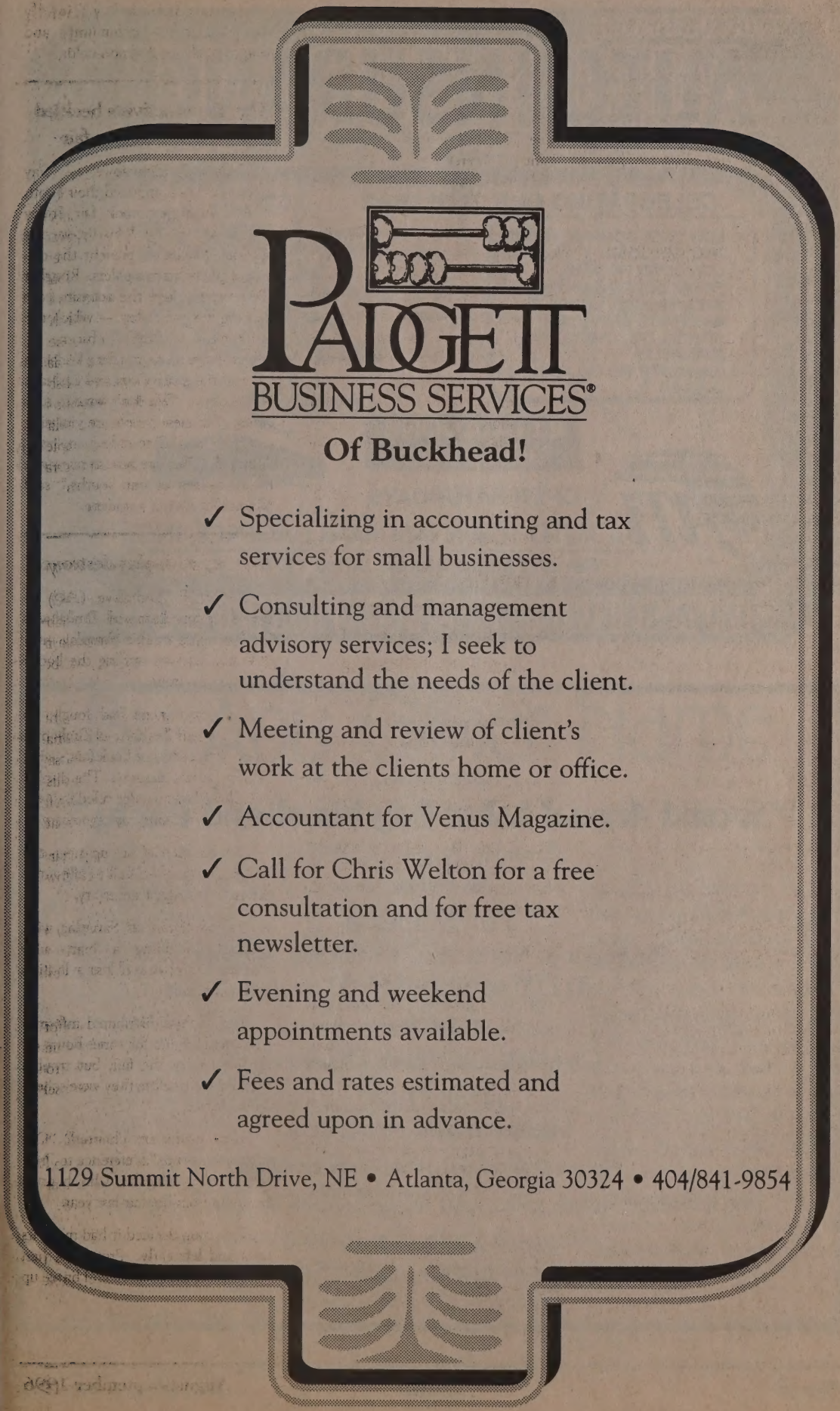
The booth was set up near the back entrance of the hall to allow the activists to escape if necessary.

Activists faced off Saturday with hecklers, including a man who attempted to grab and kiss a lesbian staffing the booth.

The activists distributed information on gay rights for three hours on the last day of the fair, but trouble started shortly before they were scheduled to leave.

Some protesters chanted, "Our president says no," a reference to President Robert Mugabe, who banned the group from the fair last year.

The group decided it had made its point and left early. Protesters then set the pamphlets ablaze and broke up the booth.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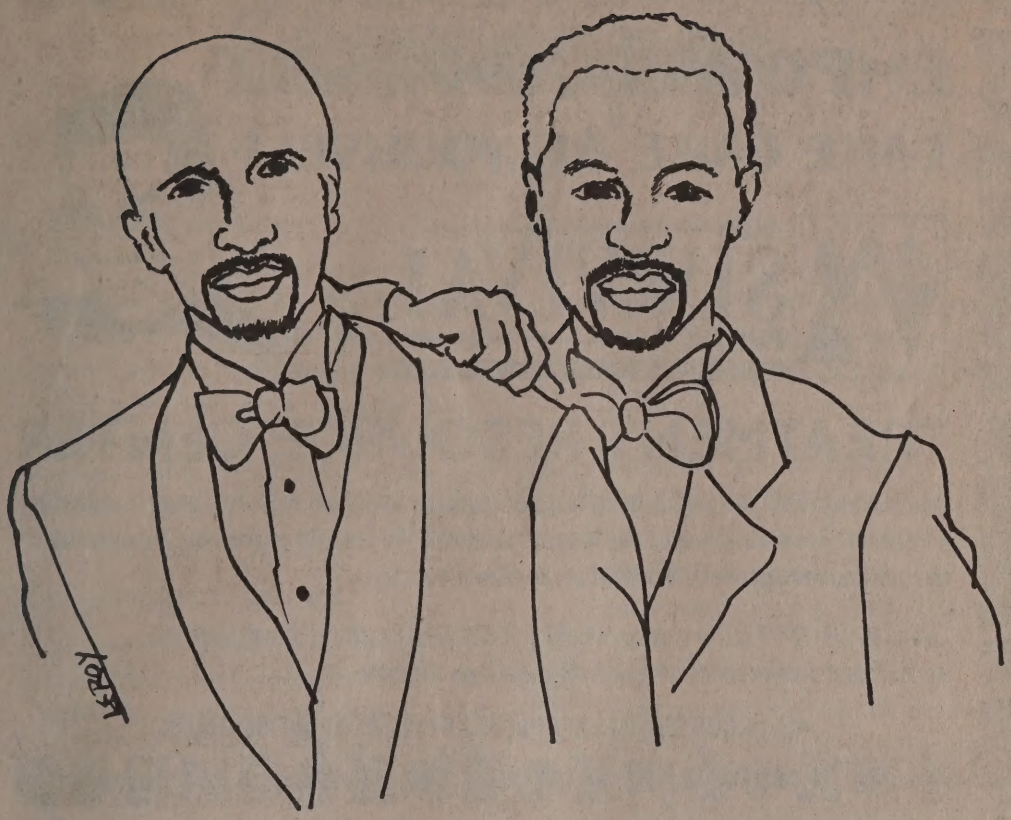

By Any Other Name

by Kevin Isom

I didn't set out from law school to become a gay lawyer. Like sexual orientation itself, it wasn't a choice. It sort of happened. Though I was probably predisposed. Most people, despite the overwhelming abundance of lawyers, see law from the outside looking in. I see it from the other way around.

One of the things I've seen a lot of lately is some very serious goings-on when gay men commit to each other. You can approximate most aspects of marriage by contract. But symbols are important, and one of the things that happens a great deal these days is the changing of names. It's simple in most states.

You can give any dumb reason you want for changing your surname, like "I think Rockefeller sounds good on me" or "I want to be named Stevens because I always liked Samantha in Bewitched." Some people tell the truth, as in, "I'm in a committed relationship, and I want my name to reflect that."

This brings us to the question, why does anyone want his last name to reflect his relationship status? But before we get into that, we should look at the patterns. There are three basic patterns gays are using in changing their names. Most people hyphenate their last names, as in Bob and Rod Paris-Jackson. (Have you ever noticed that they're always mentioned as "Bob and Rod," with Rod as second billing? Perhaps because Bob got to be on top in the surname.) Other people change their last names to something else entirely. A lesbian Jewish couple changed their last names to the Hebrew

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49

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by Dada

Happy Birthday Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

This month don't try to rush things that are not progressing as quickly as you'd like. Although you're happier in a relationship than not, love affairs at this time may be somewhat elusive. When it comes to romance you may find yourself attracted to those who have pride, ambition, and who are somewhat unconventional. Libra, Aquarius, and Cancer play roles.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You're better with the intellectual than purely emotional and not likely to wear your heart on your sleeves. Having an overly critical attitude toward life in general and romance in particular can make you miss out on some excellent opportunities for true companionship.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Now's the time to make the most of your business and financial standing. Take your ideas from the drawing board to the board room. You're good at keeping secrets, especially, how you feel about others. Your love life may not always be as harmonious as it appears.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Resist the temptation to indulge in self destructive behavior when you're feeling depressed. Allow bygones to be bygones. Use your excellent powers of concentration visualization to affect positive changes in your life that you seek.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Your strength lies in your ever present optimism. Learn to value those worse moments of your life and learn from them. Although you usually have a significant other you do much better on your own. Independence is your motto.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Being practical and living in the real world are your strong points. You possess the ability to move forward so you need to gain control over negative thoughts. The solution to a long held problem is close at hand.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Feeling dependent is the type of situation you like to steer clear of. Since you do quite alright on your own avoid hermit-like tendencies. Your misplaced compassion will get you into more trouble than it's worth.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Verbalizing your feelings could be the best way to clear the air. You are feeling quite attractive lately and it comes across to everyone around you. You're in touch with the guiding impulses of your nature and enjoy expressing yourself.

Aries (March 21-Apr. 19)

Tackling some rather important chores for a relative will result in heartfelt gratitude. Don't be afraid to allow your accomplishments to shine through. You enjoy living for the moment and to the fullest.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You seem to be able to handle just about anything which may be thrown in your direction. when you put a lot of faith in those you care for, it's a shock when someone lets you down. Keep your self esteem intact and strive on.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Ongoing relationships are a little strained presently, and new ones are dubious. Just wait it out and things will soon improve. Your outgoing nature allows you to draw friends from all walks of life.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Being quite a homebody, now would be an excellent time to capitalize on any inclinations you have in that direction. It's important to you that your loved one's emotional intensity matches or even surpasses that of your own.

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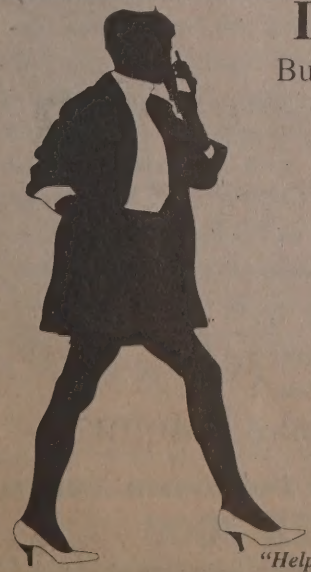

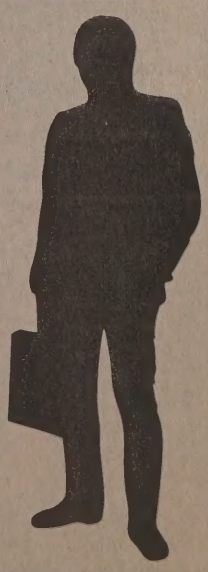

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PERRY WATKINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

He is remembered by GLAAD as a soldier who was asked and who DID tell, and served anyway; who wore his uniform and his drag outfits with equal pride.

expel Perry, and discharged him three years later when his enlistment expired.

Perry fought this decision with the help of the ACLU over the next several years in Watkins v. U.S. Army. In 1989 a federal appeals court ordered him reinstated to active duty, reasoning that if the army drafted him and repeatedly re-enlisted him knowing he was gay, then they couldn't discharge him for being gay. The Justice Department appealed the decision but the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case and let stand the decision of the lower court. Perry thus became the first openly gay serviceman to defeat the ban against gays in the military. He settled his suit with the Army, agreeing to forgo reentry to the military in return for back pay, honorable discharge, full retirement benefits, and a promotion to sergeant first class.

Perry's groundbreaking story was told in a 1994 documentary co-produced by New York's Chiqui Cartegena, entitled "Sis: The Perry Watkins Story." The film will be shown during Black gay Pride week in Atlanta and will run on Saturday Aug. 31 at 2:00pm at the Host Hotel, Holiday Inn Airport.

Perry went on making public appearances around the country, talking about his experience in the armed forces. Nothing so clearly and irrefutably displayed the Army's hypocrisy around its gay and lesbian policy as Perry's case.

On March 17, 1996 Perry J. Watkins died of AIDS-related complication in his home in Tacoma, Washington, at age 47. He is remembered by GLAAD as a soldier who was asked and who DID tell, and served anyway; who wore his uniform and his drag outfits with equal pride. He was a courageous role model for gay men and lesbians not only in the military, but in all parts of society.

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BY ANY OTHER NAME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

word meaning "hope." Which, while touching, could lead to a series of gay couples named Sunshine, Nirvana and Peace.

And finally, still others follow what some would see as a more "traditional" model. One partner changes his name to the last name of the other. This third model can be very convenient in overcoming some sorts of red tape—if you go to the hospital and you have the same last name, everyone assumes you're related, so they're less inclined to kick your lover out of the emergency room.

The problem with the "traditional" model is its origins: in property. Most people don't realize that until about the last hundred years or so, marriage was a property deal, and names reflected that fact. A woman was legally her father's property (hence she bore his last name), and upon marriage she became her husband's property (hence, she was forced to take his last name). Not exactly Barbara Cartland, when you think about it.

So the question comes to mind, why would gays want to change their names to follow in the exchange-of-property tradition? Is this a tradition that we want to be a part of? Or think about this: since there's no legalized tradition of property exchange/marriage for gays, then is it somehow better when we change our names as an expression of love and commitment to each other?

I can't really answer to those questions, at least not without offending the straight world in its entirety, but I can describe some real-life experience. Like the name change I did for the life partner of an Atlanta social worker, Richard Alston. On the day of the hearing at the courthouse, Richard waited in the corridor while his life mate and I went into the judge's chambers. I couldn't tell who was shaking more, Richard or his partner.

When the hearing was over, we went back out into the corridor, and I announced, "Richard Alston, I'd like to present to you James Matthew Alston." They embraced and kissed there in the corridor of the Fulton County Courthouse. My eyes began to tear up, and I looked quickly down at my case file, blinking hard to hide the tears. After all, it wouldn't do for a client to see his lawyer cry.

Or then there were the clients who had met each other on the gay rodeo circuit (a rather amazing phenomenon, rife with comic potential). Bob and Earl wore matching boots and cowboy hats to their wedding, and a Clint Black look-a-like sang a country wedding march. But on the day of the hearing, only one of the two showed up at the courthouse. The other was sick. As the elevator doors closed, the one confided to me that in fact his partner—I think he actually said "pardner"—had AIDS, and that they had known that he was HIV+ for two years before the wedding.

My heart sank as the elevator climbed to the fifth floor of the courthouse. There was no embrace this time outside the judge's chambers, but I put my arm around my client as we walked back to the elevator. The point of all this is not the Bob and Rod who's-on-top debate or the eternal honey-will-we-wear-spurs-to-our-wedding question. It's the outward indicia of two human beings joining themselves together as a team to embrace tomorrow.

It's hope and love and commitment and a desire to be together for the future. Traditional values, by any other name.

Most people don't realize that until about the last hundred years or so, marriage was a property deal, and names reflected that fact. A woman was legally her father's property (hence she bore his last name), and upon marriage she became her husband's property (hence, she was forced to take his last name). Not exactly Barbara Cartland, when you think about it.

Kevin Isom is an attorney and writer in Atlanta.

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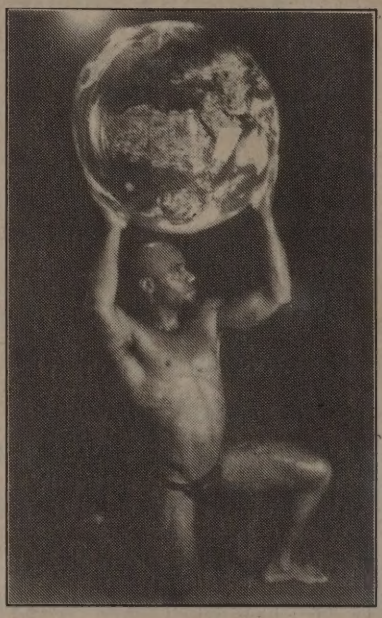

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AIDS Education Services for Minorities,(AESM)
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752-9610 (Fax)
AIDS Prevention Education for Asians and Pacific Islanders
770-936-0969 or em:KCSC1996@aol.com
AIDS Survival Project
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Brother Back-2-Back
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our cousin's house, inc.
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Outreach, Inc.
404-346-3922, 346-3036 (Fax)
Project Open Hand
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Human Rights Campaign,(HRC)
770-840-6969
Stonewall Bar Association
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Spelman College Lesbian Bisexual Alliance
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YouthPride
404-815-9965

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Brothers of Umoja
Charlotte, NC
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919-490-1555
Men of All Colors Together
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Greensboro, NC 27414
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Richmond, VA
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Project Azuca, Inc. Women / AIDS
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National Carolina Mobilization '96
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The Brotherhood of Gentlemen
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Men of Color Against AIDS (MOCAA)
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BLACKLIST-Who's Who in Black Gay community
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NATIONAL EVENTS

AUG. 27-SEPT. 1

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Week—In The Life Atlanta, Venus Magazine, Adodi Muse, Think It's Not When It Iz, and Second Sunday hosts PRIDE IS POWER '96. See Black Gay Pride Pocket Guide on page 12.

Contact numbers: ITLA Pride line 404-872-6410. Host Hotel, Holiday Inn Airport, $65 sing/dbl 404-762-8411. Venus Magazine info line 404-622-8069. Adodi Muse info line 404-525 521-2515. Think It's Not info line 770-808-3984. Second Sunday info line 404-325-7321

OCT. 10-13, 1996

Bay Bash '96, San Francisco—Thurs: Opening Party, The Box, 9 pm-2 am; Fri: Cabaret, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, 7:30 pm; Sat: BBQ, Lake Merritt, Downtown Oakland, 1 pm-6 pm; Sun: Sunset Cruise, Sausalito 5 pm-8 pm. For info call 415-922-5156

NOVEMBER 1-3, 1996

Phoenix, AZ Divas in the Desert—Fri: Bid Whist National Tournament, Lexington Hotel, 7:30 pm; Sat: Mr. and Ms. Hot Body Picnic at Roosevelt Dam & Lake, 12 noon; Sat: Disco Dance & Diva Contest, 9 pm. For info call 602-978-6219

OUT & about

L-R, poet, Queen; author, Joan Fountain; publisher, Charlene Cothran; actress, Debra Dukes; image consultant, Joy Barnes; and graphic artist Phyllis Robinson all enjoyed the National Black Arts Festival's opening after party gala at the Occidental Grand Hotel.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

The 'Atlanta Delegation' plans to attend the 10th Anniversary Convention of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, in L.A. in February 1997.

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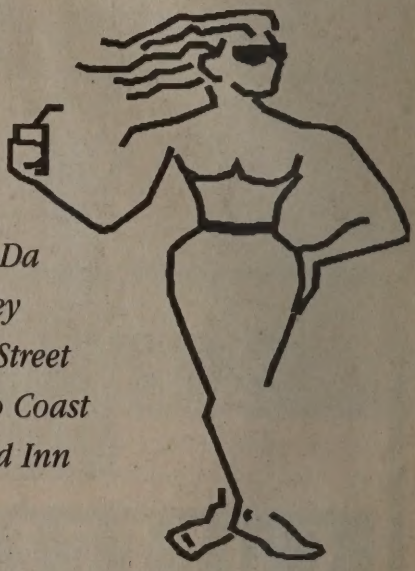
The Infamous Wet T-Shirt Contest at Atlantic Shores Resort
The WomenFest Tennis Tournament at Holiday Inn Beachside



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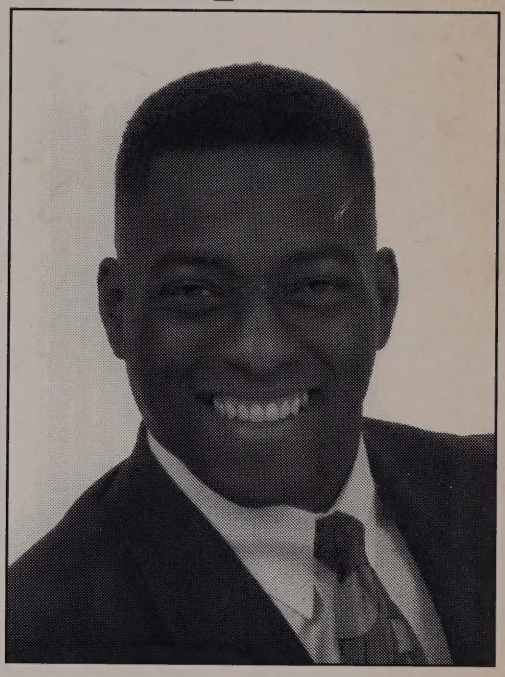

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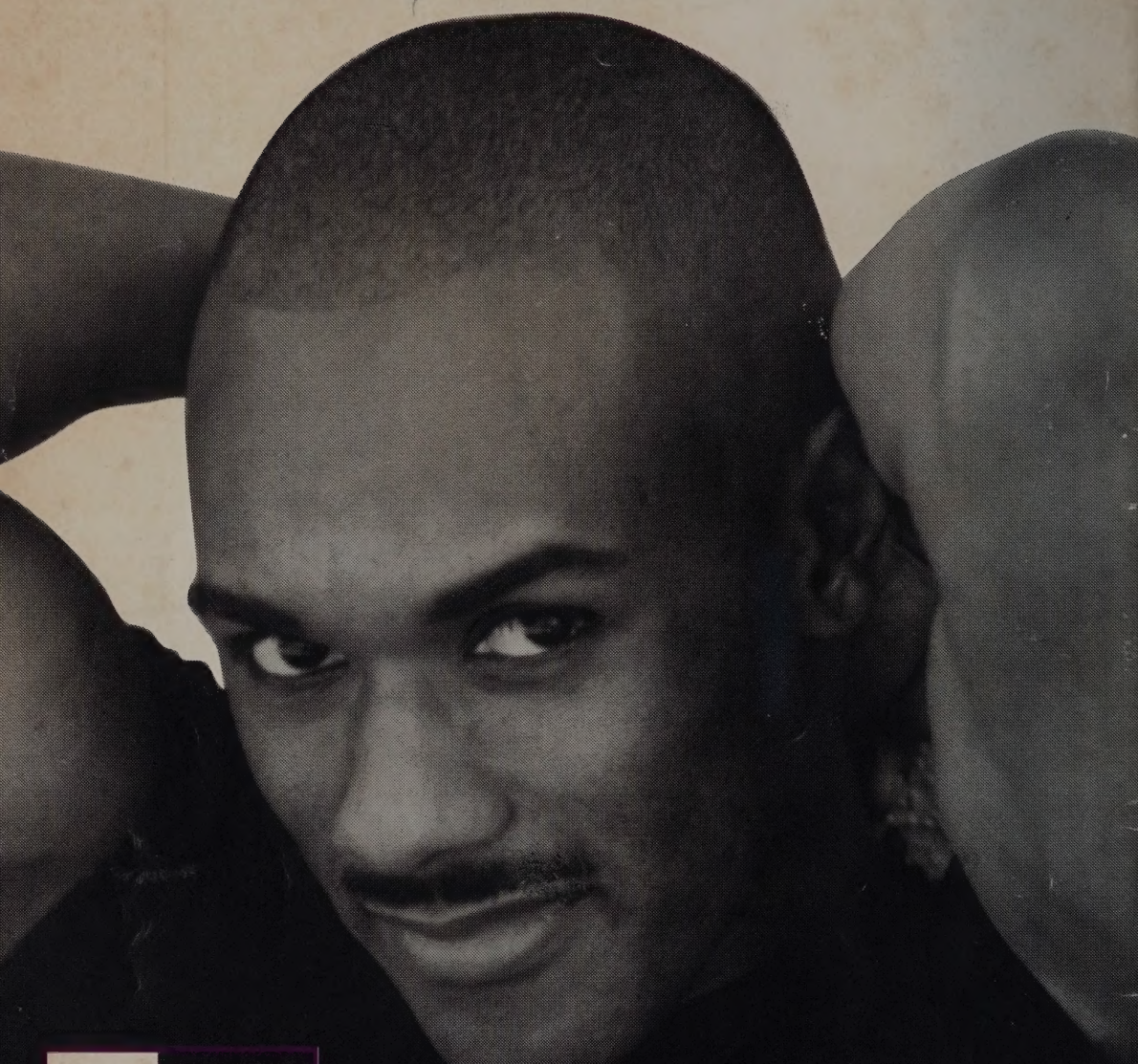
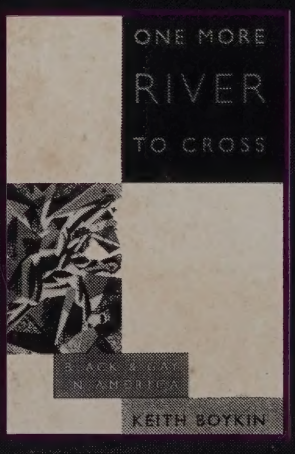




The Book:

One More River to Cross

By Keith Boykin

Executive Director of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum

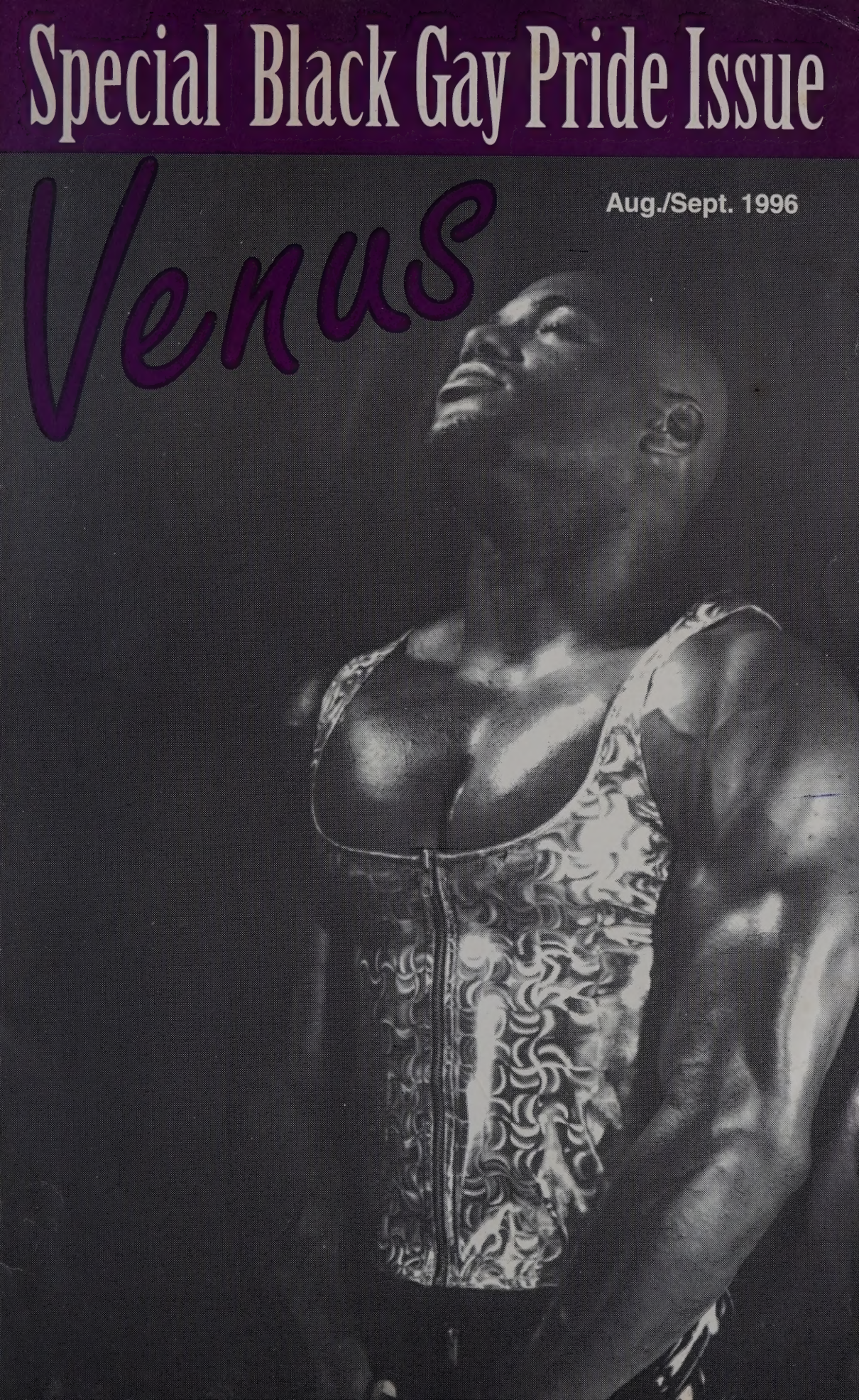
August 31, 2 p.m. - Shrine of the Black Madonna Books

September 1, 7:30 p.m. - Outwrite Books

Special Black Gay Pride Issue

Venus

Aug./Sept. 1996



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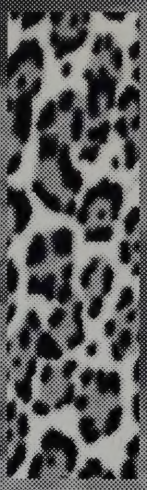

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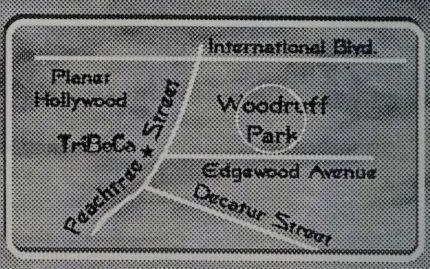

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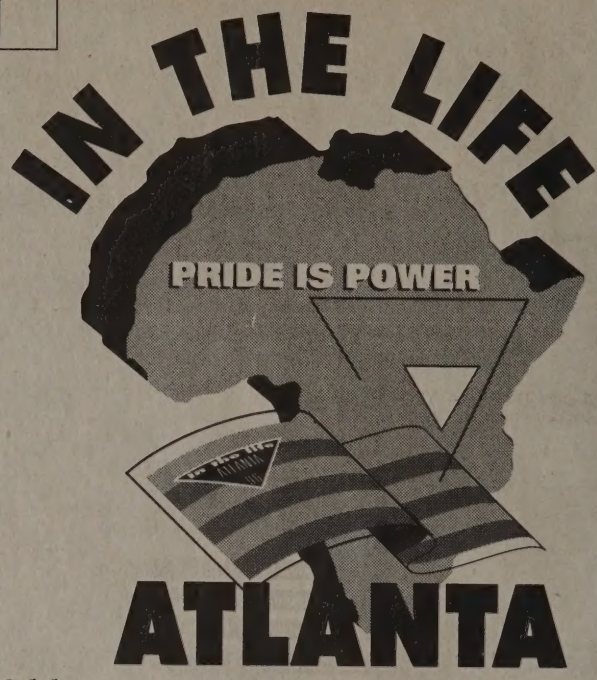
Get Your Life

August 30 — September 2



"Celebrating the Black Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Community"

Itinerary

Thursday	*August 29, 1996*	*Kick Off Reception*
Friday	*August 30, 1996*	*Welcome Reception*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Cultural Arts Festival*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Candlelight Vigil*
Saturday	*August 31, 1996*	*Venus Magazine sponsored Black Lesbian/Gay Ball*
Sunday	*September 1, 1996*	*Family Reunion Picnic*

Accommodations

coordinated by Venus Magazine

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**Host Hotel*

ITLA Pride Line 404-872-6410 • Fax 404-874-1024
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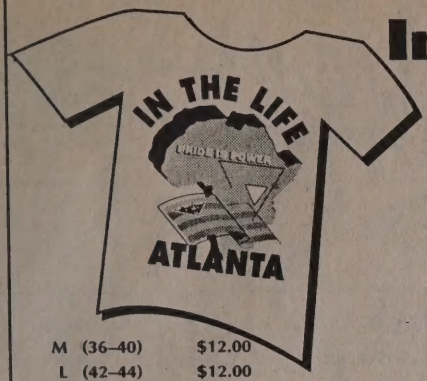
In The Life Atlanta

"Celebrating the Black Les/Bi/Gay/Trans Community"



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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR

I read your article "My Body-My Temple," (July 1996), and was quite impressed with your frankness and determination. It seemed like you showed 'tough love' for your people. This is a good thing. I'm now working toward becoming a vegetarian, but I'm having a hard time kicking the coffee habit. I guess my addiction to caffeine is stronger than my will to stop.

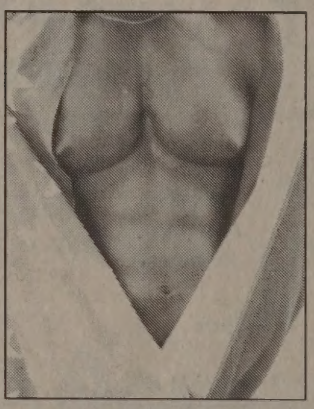
R.J.
Atlanta

DEAR EDITOR

Thank you for the story on the church burnings, "Where will These Fires Lead Us?,"(July 1996). The article truly helped me to step back and place things into perspective. The concept of the burnings symbolizing the "pushing back" of Americans unwilling to accept diversity or change is interesting.

Toby Taylor
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR



Let me take a moment to commend you on your great cover photo on the July issue. Not only was it creative, but it represented the natural sculptured beauty of the African-American woman. Great job!

Robin Joy
Atlanta

Sorry Robin! The model on the July cover is a man! Don't feel bad, girl! Every woman in the City thought the image was a female's body.

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

July 1996
Vol. 2., No. 7

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COVER SHOT
TONY
by Jena P. Jones

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Atlanta Heats Up for Black Gay Pride Celebration!

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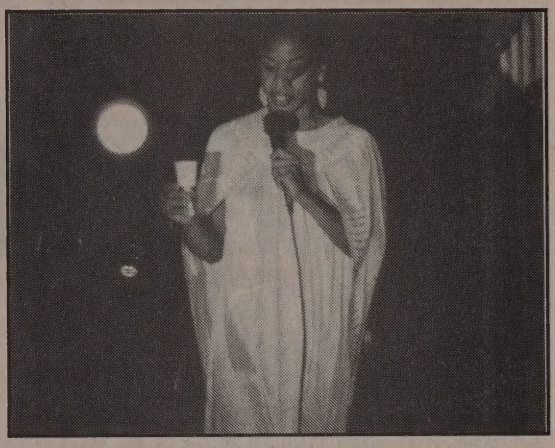

I SAID YES!

The Perry Watkins Story!!

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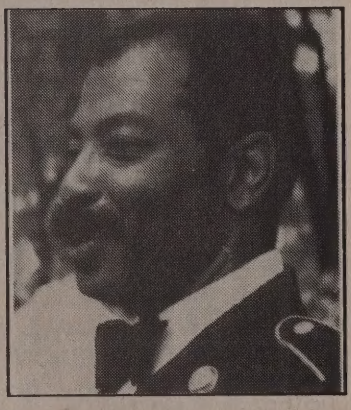

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Photo by Ron Singleton

Venus™ MAGAZINE

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Black Gay Pride Ball

Sat. August 31, $10.00

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Holiday Inn Airport

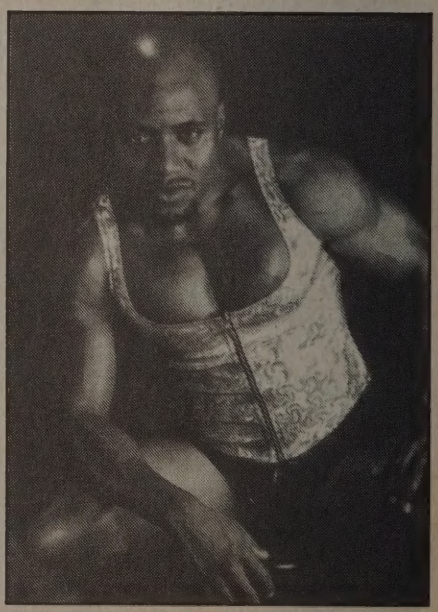

photo by Jena P. Jones

All Venus Events are held at the Host Hotel, Holday Inn Airport:

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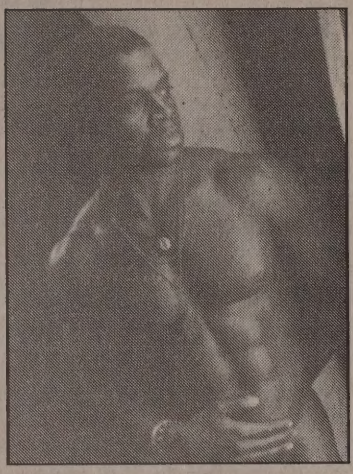
Code Word - "Black Pride"

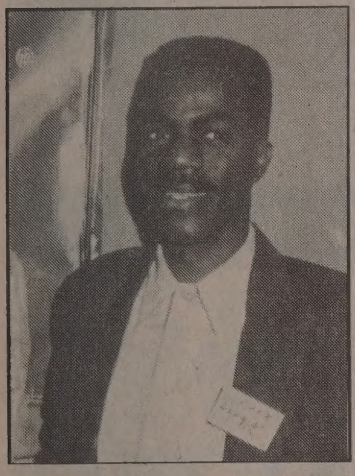
H O S T S

Black Gay Pride!

"WHO HE?"



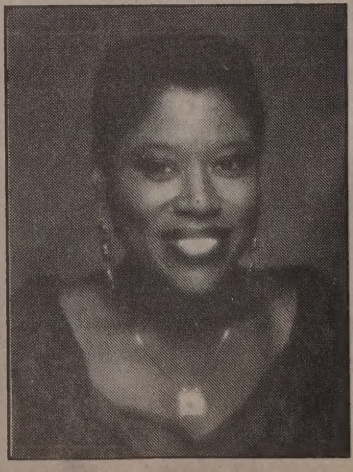
He's your cover man on Venus! July issue without the flag! Photo-journalist Warren O. Fletcher opens his "Who He?" exhibit on Friday August 30, 6 p.m.
Holiday Inn Airport



HOW TO FIND THAT SPECIAL MAN

Relationship Therapist, Ulester Douglas, MSW, facilitates this dynamic ***FREE*** workshop for Brothers only. • ***Holiday Inn Airport***
Saturday August 31, 12 noon - 1:30 p.m.

BUTCH IN THE STREETS, FEMME IN THE SHEETS



Corporate Trainer and author, Joan Fountain, facilitates an open discussion exploring lesbian sexuality. A real gender-bender for sisters only. ***FREE!***
Holiday Inn Airport
Sat. August 31, 2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Ask Marian

PHOTOGRAPHY: JENA P. JONES

New York Advice columnist, Marian Farrah, has joined the Venus Family!! From London to Trinidad, from Canada to Detroit, Marian has lived, seen and heard it all! So when you have questions about relationships, whether they be about love, friendship, family, coming out, your job, sex or the lack of sex, just do what we do...Ask Marian!

Dear Marian,

I am a 40 year-old professional who's caught in between a rock and a hard place. I thought I was secure with my homosexuality. However my partner is becoming more publicly seen and known. I want to support all he does, but I get these feelings of reluctance and decline some of his invitations to participate in "the causes." How can I get over myself and really become liberated?

Dear Almost Comfortably Out,

You have clearly come out to yourself and are comfortable with your partner in your private life. But being "out" in public can feel like coming out all over again, each time. What was it like for you when you first came out to yourself? How does your homosexuality affect your relationships with your family and friends? Painful experiences such as loss of esteem, rejection or non-acceptance from people you care about can affect the way you feel about your homosexuality. How can you become liberated? By accepting yourself unconditionally. We are all exposed from an early age to negative attitudes and ignorance about homosexuality. These attitudes come from the very places we rely on to learn about ourselves and the world. We need to unlearn these untruths. You don't need to "get over yourself," you need to heal from the internalized homophobia that is a part of our every day diet. The first step is to recognize it. The second step is to validate yourself. Break the isolation and talk to others in the life about your struggles. Surround yourself with affirming images of gay life through as many mediums as possible: books, performance, art and journal writing. Your self-liberation will be a process that you will repeat for the rest of your life.

If you have a question for Marian just drop her a line at: E-mail: Venusmag1@aol.com or write ASK MARIAN-VENUS MAGAZINE P.O. Box 89238 Atlanta, GA 30312

Venus Hits the Internet

WE LOVE LETTERS!!

We need to hear from you!! Your letters to the Editor are always welcome and needed. Whether you love us, hate us or simply want to respond to an article, send us more mail!

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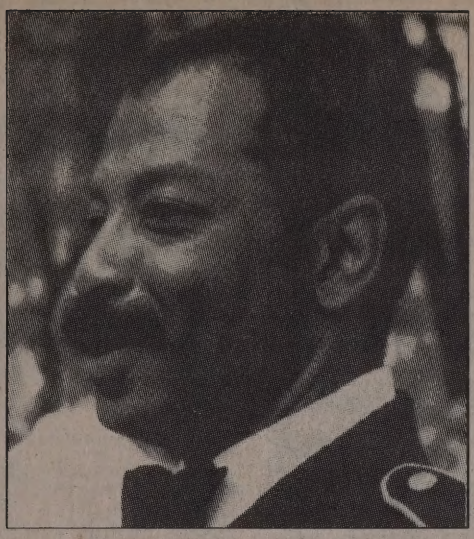

"I SERVED WITH PRIDE, HONOR AND DISTINCTION, FROM INDUCTION TO RETIREMENT. AN AFRICAN AMERICAN, WHO IS HOMOSEXUAL. I AM NOT THE FIRST TO DO SO AND THERE IS NO REASON I SHOULD BE THE LAST. QUITE LIKE THE RUNNER WHO BROKE THE FOUR MINUTE MILE, TO IMPROVE ON HIS EFFORT, THE SUCCESSFUL ONES STUDIED HIS TECHNIQUES."

Perry J. Watkins Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army (Retired) in a letter to President Clinton

by Morgan Gwenwald

Before we ever heard that phrase "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Sgt. Perry Watkins was not only telling, he was performing regular drag acts while serving in the U. S. Army. Despite his recent death, the story of Perry Watkins and his struggle with the U.S. Government lives on as one of the most remarkable chapters in our fight for inclusion in the military.

Perry was drafted into the Army in 1968 at the height of the Vietnam war. On his official forms he checked the box "yes" in acknowledgement of his homosexual tendencies. He described his enlistment experience: as the examining physician held my Report of Medical History form in his hands and asked me, "What does this mean?" pointing to the block I had checked "yes." I said, "It means just what it says." He then asked, "And what is that?" With six other people present and listening, I said, "It means that I am homosexual." I made my statement with pride and dignity without shame or fear. I was immediately sent to an Army psychiatrist, who believed humiliation was part of the evaluation process. I was asked about sexual conduct, and acknowledged both oral and anal activity... I was ultimately found qualified for service and drafted in May of 1968.

Perry went on to negotiate his way of serving with pride and professionalism, being open about his sexuality to the chain of command and his fellow soldiers, and demanding the same respect and protection afforded all soldiers. He re-enlisted several times and served successfully for the next fourteen years. Within that time he also performed for the Army as "Simone," his drag persona.

Then in 1982 the Department of Defense issued a directive dictating "homosexuality incompatible with military service," and claiming it undermined discipline, good order, and morale. At this period the Army moved to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Pocket Guide

Host Hotel Holiday Inn Airport 404-762-8411, code for special rate, "Black Pride'

Tuesday Aug. 27

ADODI MUSE-TONY DANIELS' ONE MAN SHOW

-Miles To Go Before I Sleep. Gay and Lesbian Visitor's Center. 1374 W. Peachtree St, 8pm, $5.00

Thursday Aug. 29

IN THE LIFE ATLANTA,(ITLA)

Kick off reception, call Pride line for time, location and tickets at 404 872-6410.

Friday Aug. 30

ITLA -WELCOME RECEPTION

6 pm-9 pm Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave, 85 south ,exit 19: Speakers Dr. Sylvia Rhue and Keith Boykin. Call Pride line for tickets. 404-872-6410

VENUS-PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT "WHO HE?"

by Atlanta photojournalist Warren O. Williams, opening 6 pm., Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 South, exit 19, Free.

VENUS-OFFICIAL WOMENS ICE BREAKER

9 pm-2 Am Holiday Inn Airport 1380 Virginia Ave, 85 South, exit 19: $7

Saturday Aug. 31

ITLA- CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL

11 am-6 pm, call Pride line for location and tickets at 404-872-6410. Showing 'All God's Children' co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue.

VENUS-SHOWING THE PERRY WATKINS STORY

2 pm, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 South, exit 19, Free.

VENUS-FOR BROTHERS ONLY

12 noon-1:30 pm, Workshop on "Finding and Keeping that Special Man" Facilitator, Ulester Douglas MSW, relationship therapist. Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19 , Free.

VENUS-FOR SISTERS ONLY

2 pm-3:30 pm, Open Discussion explores Lesbian sexuality, "Butch in the Streets, Femme in the sheets and vice-verse" and "Why are male identified black lesbians the least accepted in black gay culture" Facilitated by Joan Fountain, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19, Free.

BLACKOUT-HOTLANTA '96

Black Pride Bash, 2 pm-8pm, Williamsberg Estates, Sir Henry Street, South West Atlanta, free food, cash bar, $5 call for directions 404-629-9879.

B.W.M.T. ATLANTA-SUMMER BASH 1996

Pool party plunge #2. Food provided (cookout). Fun begins @ 2:30 p.m. Call Tony and Tray for details @ 404-609-9773. 738 Hill St. SE (Grant Park)

SECOND SUNDAY-WHERE THE BOYS ARE '96

3 pm-10 pm, 3256 Hwy 3; lake, entertainment, Jacuzzi, music, food, games, $10 , call for directions 404-325-7321.

ITLA -CANDLELIGHT AIDS AND BREAST CANCER VIGIL

7 pm ,Howell Park-West End, Ralph David Abernathy Blvd.

BMT-SECOND ANNUAL LAOR DAY PARTY

The Mansion, Piedmont @ North Ave., $12 adv/$15 door. (404) 755-2684

VENUS- BLACK GAY PRIDE BALL

Grand Ballroom, Holiday Inn Airport, 1380 Virginia Ave., 85 south, exit 19, Festive Attire, $10 door, cash bar, hot music and entertainment.

Sunday Sept. 1

ITLA- FAMILY REUNION PICNIC

Perkerson Park South West Atlanta, 11 am-dusk, Free, call Pride line for directions. 404-872-6410.

From The Editor

What a difference a year makes!

Atlanta's Black gay and lesbian community has grown in monumental proportions over the past 2 years, but these last 12 months has been phenomenal. There exist for the first time a REAL sense of community, meaning that people and organizations really do care about one another.

Organizations like Second Sunday , a discussion group for black gay men and Zami, a support group for black lesbians have held joint steering committee meetings to learn more about one another. Although both groups have exited independently for years, the need to share knowledge and information about 'what it's like to be a black lesbian or gay man in Atlanta' has proven to become necessary. Why is this sharing of knowledge necessary? Because we do not have a choice in the matter, we MUST work together and we must get over our stereotypes of each other in order to best communicate. The brothers had a chance to learn that all black lesbians are not 'militant man haters' and the Sisters have learned that all gay men are not 'sissies with attitudes'.

Speaking of working together, our social organizations, once rivals, are now pooling their resources to get the word out about their various events. Our AIDS organizations are getting more financial and volunteer help from black gays and lesbians than the years before. Atlanta's black gay pride organization, In The Life Atlanta, with a handful of volunteers has planned a fabulous Labor Day weekend. Although faces have changed over the past year, the group started with nothing and now has a solid non-profit structure and is already working on next year's budget. Of course nothing happens without a bit of drama but that seems to be part of the growth process with ANY organization. To ITLA we say 'Well Done!'

As a growing community we also recognize our political strength. A sizable donation to Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney's campaign marked the first time a group of Out African-American gays and lesbians in Atlanta jointly endorsed a candidate for public office. It's only a matter of time before a political umbrella group for black gay and lesbian organizations will surface. Our community needs it and all that we need some how comes forth.

The bottom line is : the Train has finally left the station! If we as a community can stay on track, we might actually make it to the next millennium, politically and socially, 'ON TIME'. And that's what I call BLACK GAY PRIDE.

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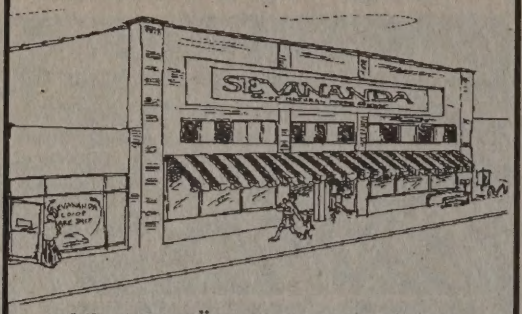

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Pride is Power!

by Charlene Cothran

Linda Villarosa, Executive Editor of Essence Magazine, is one of many to appear in Dr. Sylvia Rhue's documentary 'All God's Children,' to debut during Black Gay Pride.

The theme for In The Life Atlanta, the new organization which now produces the Atlanta's Black gay pride weekend, rings aloud with the truth about those of African Descent who are gay/lesbian/transgendered and questioning people-We Ain't Shamed and We Ain't Scared to claim all of who we are. Atlanta's Pride celebration, now in it's second organized year, will offer visitors from around the country an array of Proud and Powerful activities including a cultural arts festival featuring the Atlanta debut of "All God's Children." The film, co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue, a licensed clinical social worker and Doctor of human sexuality of Los Angeles, is a critically acclaimed documentary which deals head on with the effects of homophobia on African-Americans, particularly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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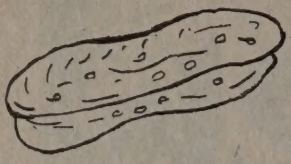
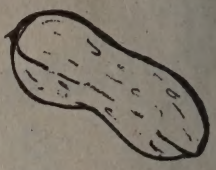


LEVEL 2

ART GALLERY & SPECIAL EVENT VENUE



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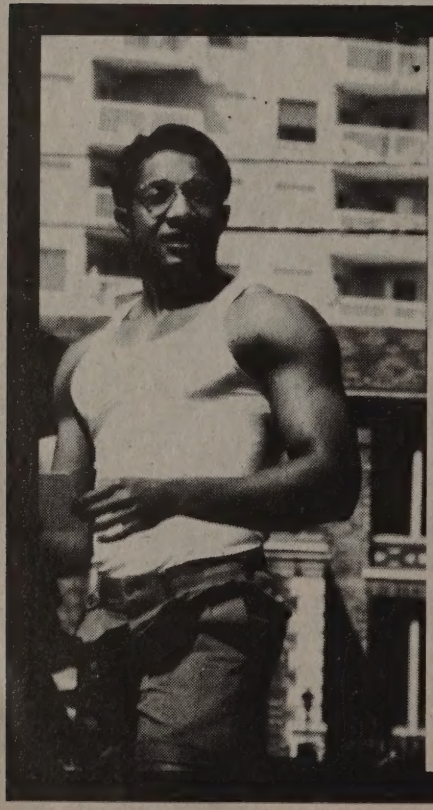

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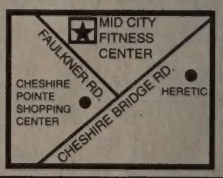

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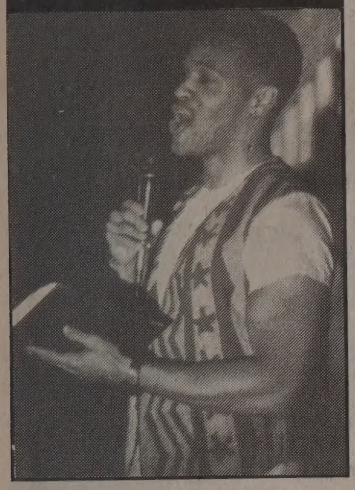
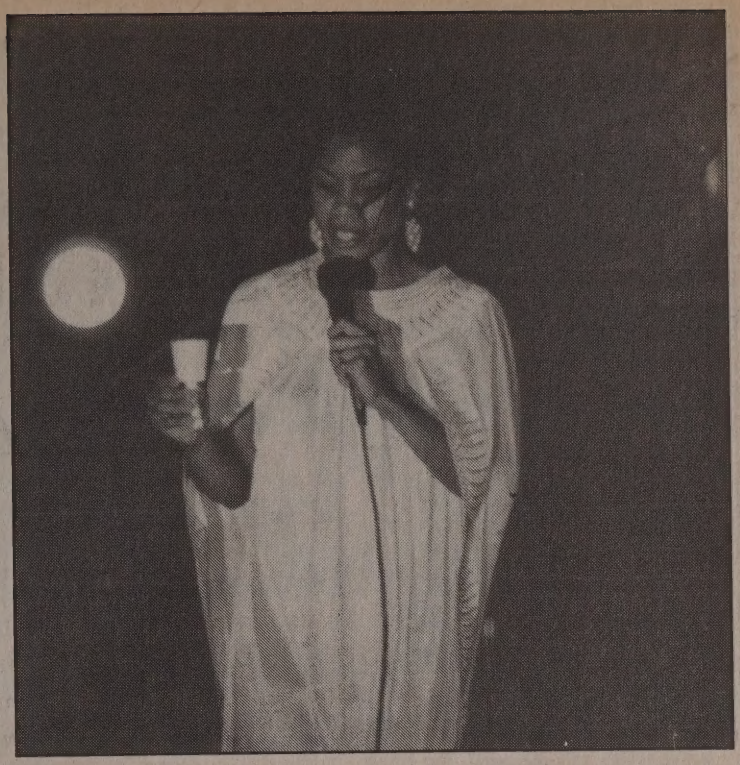
PRIDE IS POWER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17





Atlanta actress J. Karen Thomas, right, accompanied by Stewart, performed at last years Candlelight AIDS Memorial.

on African-American Churchgoers. Check your pride guide for time and location.

The story of the life of Perry Watkins has also been captured on film and will be presented during the Pride festivities. Watkins, a black Sergeant First Class drafted in the U.S. Army in 1968, on his official forms checked the box 'yes' acknowledging that he was gay. The film describes his enlistment experiences and includes several scenes of drag shows he performed for the entertainment pleasure of his comrades. The film is co- produced by New York's Chiqui Cartegena, and will be shown at the host hotel, Holiday Inn Airport on Saturday Aug. 31 at 2:00 pm.

Perhaps no one captures the Pride and Power of Black men better than Atlanta photographer Warren O. Williams. In his exhibit entitled "Who He?", Williams' goal is to 'change the representation of black men in art, through documentary portraits and photojournalism.' Williams' very androgynous shot of a brother draped in the American flag appeared on the front cover Venus' July issue. The controversial cover shot provoked both raved reviews and shock as many readers were convinced that the model was a nude woman. The exhibit will hang at the host hotel, Holiday Inn Airport on Fri. and Sat. Aug. 30th and 31st.

Speaking of Pride and Power, free workshops will be held honoring the relationships of black gays and lesbians. Ulester Douglas, MSW, consultant/Imago relationship therapist will address 'How do we improve the chances of finding and keeping that special man' and 'How to get through the difficult times—the power struggles.' This session is for brothers only, from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm on Saturday at the host hotel. Seating is limited!

The ladies in the City are strongly encouraged to attend a discussion/workshop on lesbian sexuality, more specifically, 'Why a 'Butch' in the streets tends to be 'Femme' between the sheets and vice-versa' and 'Why the African-American male-identified black lesbian is the least accepted among black gay culture.' The discussion will be facilitated by Sacramento's Joan Fountain, dynamic corporate consultant

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

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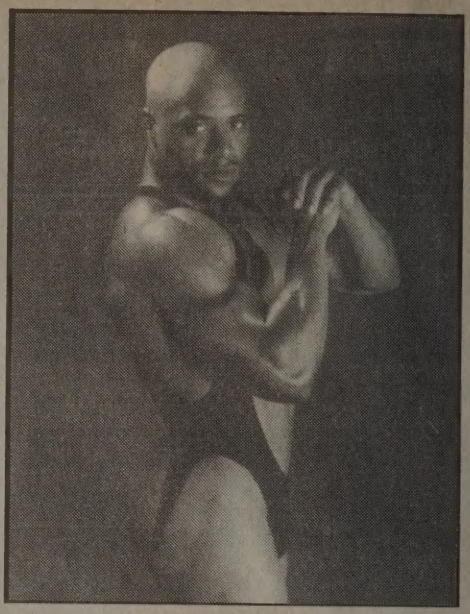

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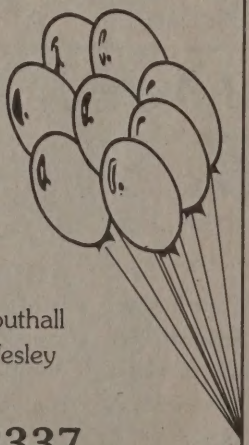

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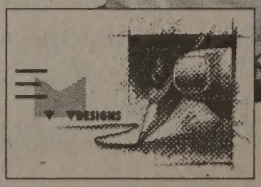

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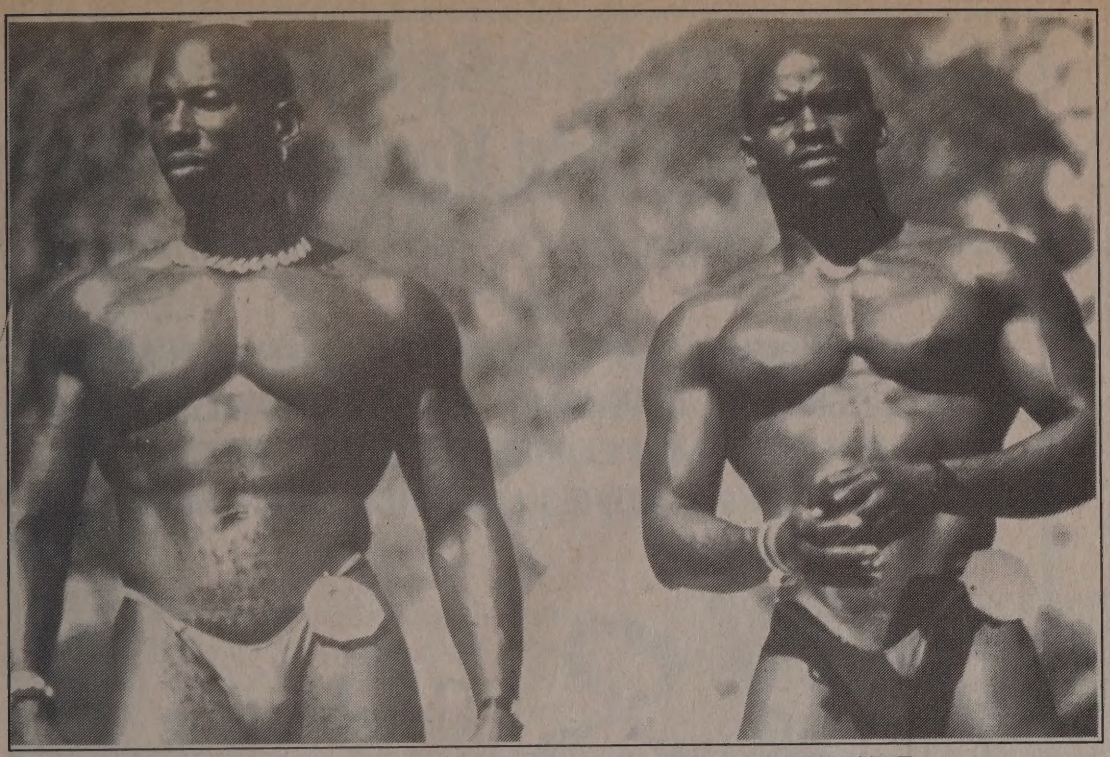

Hard Body Contestants head to Phoenix, Arizona's Black Gay Pride, DIVAS IN THE DESERT.
PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

PRIDE IS POWER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

and author of an autobiography 'Don't Get me Started!'

The Official Women's Ice Breaker will immediately follow ITLA's Welcome reception at the Holiday Inn Airport's main Ballroom from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Meet gorgeous women from all over the world at this 'getting-to-know-you' party.

What ever you do, DON'T MISS the Black Gay Ball on Saturday night! Doors open at 11 pm at the main Ballroom, Trust that Atlanta WILL NOT be the same the next morning! With hot music and dancing, Festive Attire, and great entertainment, we promise to keep you screaming and dancing all night!

What would Black Gay Pride be without a Picnic? In classic southern style ITLA's Family Reunion in Perkerson Park will close the weekend of celebration. Enjoy great food, vendors, games and music while making plans to attend the next two black gay Pride Celebrations! That's right! Just when you thought it was over, San Francisco's Bay Bash '96 enjoy's it's second year of pride and power. Over 1,500 attendees are expected at their annual opening party, followed by their Bay Bash Cabaret, the Bay Bash Barbecue and of course the Bay Bash Sunset Cruise. Scheduled for October 10-13,1996, contact event producer Andre Morgan at 415-922-5156.

Perhaps the ultimate black gay pride experience will take place in Phoenix, Arizona, Nov. 1,2,3, 1996. Divas in The Desert host it's first pride celebration with an impressive line up of activities. Some of the highlights include a welcome reception at the Ramada Hotel Camelback, a national Bid Whist Tournament, a Unity picnic at Roosevelt Dam & Lake and a Hot Body Contest -male & female divisions-featuring Atlanta's own Tony D., winner of L.A.'s At The Beach Mr. Hot Body '96. For more info call 602-978-6219.

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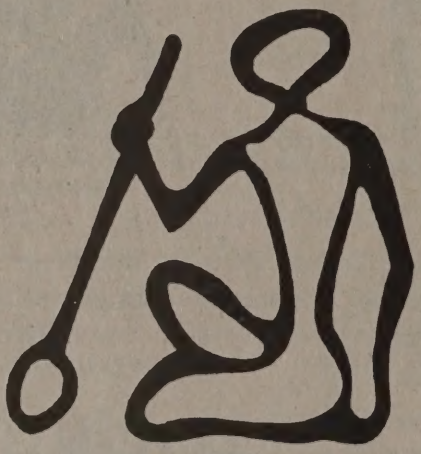

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Miles to Go Before I Sleep

a one man show by Tony Daniels

by Duncan Teague

They stood on the steps of the church discussing the possibility of their groups working together. Her theatre troupe had recently moved south from New York. They were quickly gaining a good reputation in the Atlanta's les/gay/bi/trans community. His literary group had been in existence less than a year, and gaining exposure by performing on a regular basis. They talked briefly about their roles in this collaboration, and their excitement about this joint venture. Slated for August 27, at the Gay and Lesbian Visitors Center.

She is Sonya Hemphill, the founder and Executive Director of Think It's Not When It Is (TINWII) Inc. The troupe is dedicated to promoting positive lesbian and gay imagery in the media. Founded in 1990, TINWII, has established itself as one of the premiere lesbian theatre troupes in the country.

He is Tony Daniels, the president and a founder of The Adodi-Muse-An Outsiders Collective and a Gay Negro Ensemble, the only literary group for African-American gay and bisexual men in Atlanta. The Adodi-Muse commits it's time and energy to the telling of their individual and collective experiences, performing the work they pen and the work of others who support their survival. They hope to create the lasting presence of their stories by publishing and chronicling these words, song and poetry.

Adodi Muse's Tony Daniels performs his life story at the Gay & Lesbian Visitor's Center.

The joint venture between the two is a one "queen" performance based on a transitional period of Tony Daniels' life. The performance will cover the 11 years, from May of 1985 until the present. The first 9 years., Tony was dealing with being HIV+, and the last two have found him battling with AIDS. This is a very personal, powerful, and frank look at the deadly affects of this deadly virus. The performance piece is being called "Miles To Go Before I Sleep". Ms. Hemphill will direct and produce, The Adodi-Muse will co-produce, and Tony Daniels will make his acting debut as the character, Solomon, based on his life.

This will be the first of many performances done by an individual member of The Adodi-Muse, with the remaining members as producers. They will also continue to collaborate with the many talented artists in the community. They feel that by encouraging each member to do independent projects, they will bring back to the Muse more experiences and a renewed love for the work. You can get more information by contacting the Adodi-Muse at (404) 521-2515.

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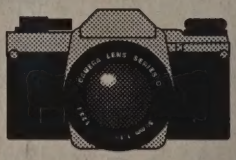

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Age: . . . . . Timeless

Status: . . . . . Single

Career: . . . . . Literary expressionist

Hometown: . Philadelphia, PA

Latest Book:. "Pryor Convictions and other life sentences" by Richard Pryor with Todd Gold

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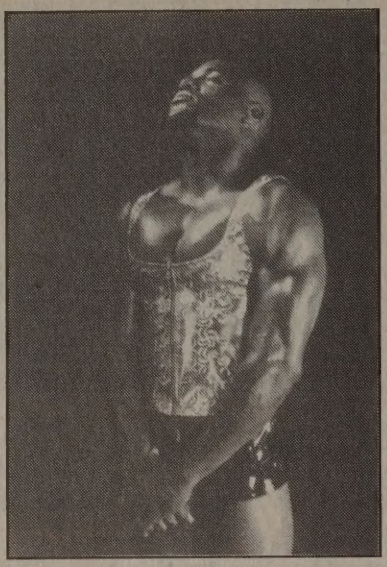

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Venus Magazine is now accepting submissions for publication. Send a sample of your writing to us at P. O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312 or e-mail: Venusmag1@aol.com.

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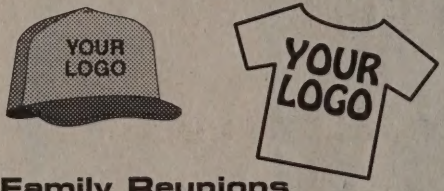

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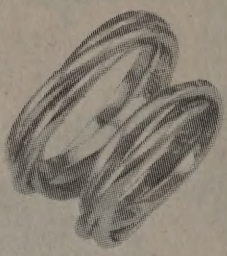

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:. . . . . Eric Jon Rawlins

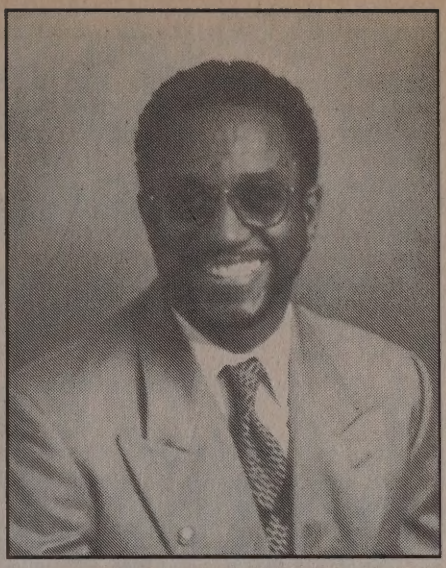
Age: . . . . . "Every age has its pleasures, its style of wit and its own ways" - Boileau-Despreaux

Status: . . . . . Romantically Challenged

Career: . . . . . Information sciences and volunteer

Hometown: . Fort Lauderdale, FL

Latest Book:. "The Black Holocaust for Beginners" by S.E. Anderson



With inspiration from the Million Man March, foundation from BLK and support from the Broward County Library, Eric researched, and developed 'NLIGHT'N'N', published "Read and Write On!", a directory of publications by and about people of Afrikan decent In-The-Life.

Eric has been in one of four vice presidential positions of the Fort Lauderdale Branch N.A.A.C.P. for over a dozen years, is an adult literacy tutor trainer; serves on the county's literacy board, and is on Fort Lauderdale's Aviation Advisory Board.

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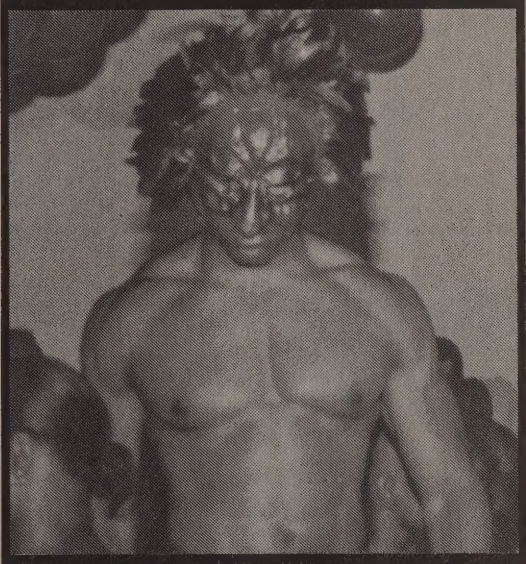

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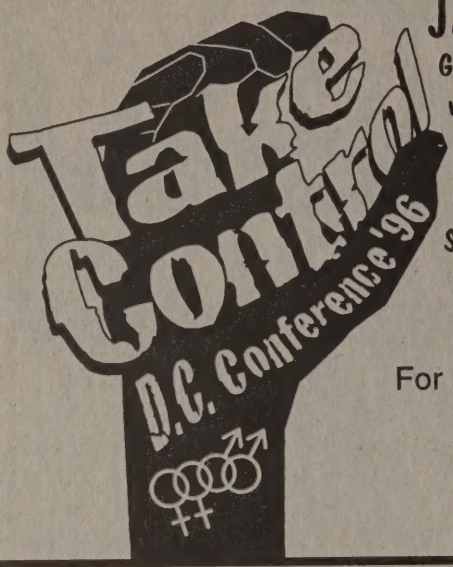

Join the Washington, D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians, Gay Men & Bisexuals for an exciting and motivation weekend of celebrating our Taking Control!

Conference Highlights include:
Opening Congressional Reception, Exciting General Sessions, Informative Workshops, Parties & More...

For more information, to volunteer or to be included on our mailing list to:
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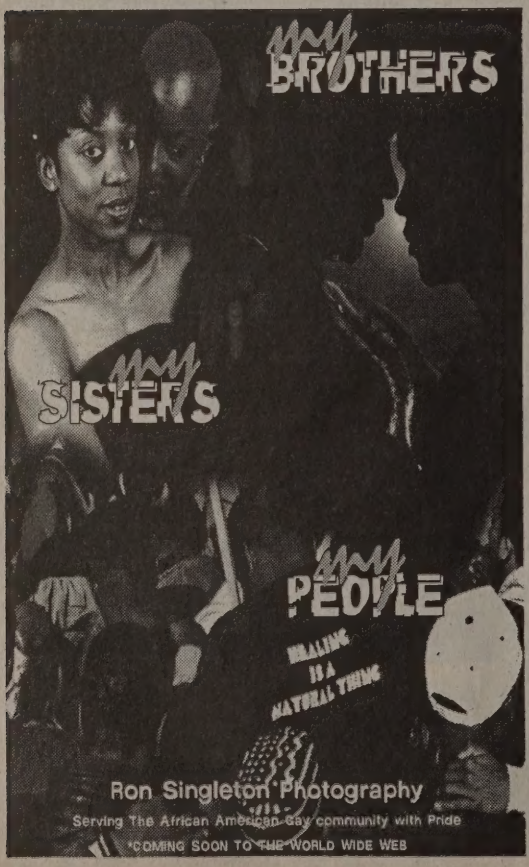
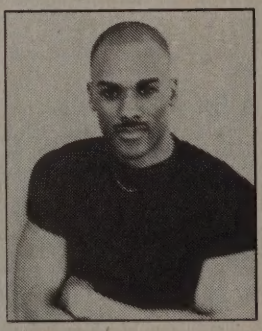


Meet the Author
Sunday, September 1 • 7:30 p.m.



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Take Control

Honorary Co-chair Senator Carol Moseley-Braun

This will be the seventh year the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals will host its annual conference. This September 13-14 over 200 members of the black gay and lesbian community will meet at the Dupont Plaza Hotel to celebrate this year's conference theme, "Take Control."

According to Rosalind Smith, Conference Co-Chair, "Take Control, is very liberating as a conference theme. It really says out loud that black lesbians and gay men are visible, and that it is our turn to grasp all of the powers that are affecting our lives."

The two day event, opens with a congressional reception on Capitol Hill. This year, Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun will serve as honorary co-chair of the event. "Last year we were very successful with the opening reception," said Everett Hamilton, Conference Co-Chair. "Mayor Marion Barry and D.C. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, were honorary co-chairs along with an honorary reception committee composed of 12 members of the Congressional Black Caucus and members of the D.C. City Council and School Board. This was the first time that an event by black lesbians and gay men had attracted that much visible support by public decision makers. That tells us that our message is starting to resonate in city hall and congressional offices."

Charisse Barsella and Frank Long have developed the Saturday conference program. The day will be filled with workshops, speakers and will close with a large group session designed to empower attendees to take control of the various situations that they encounter daily.

Workshops are divided into three tracks, Financially Speaking, Free Your Spirit and Sexual Politics. Topics range from workshops on doing business on the internet, to understanding our sexuality as revealed in sacred texts. "For too long black people have felt that homosexuality is not included in the Bible, and that we are somehow condemned. "That is false, said Barsella." "This workshop will look at all sacred text. And will show how gay men and lesbians are not only represented in the Bible, but how our creator's love is extended to all," she said.

According to Long, "I can't wait for the reaction of the audience at the workshop on "Tops and Bottoms, Femmes and Butch." Although it is a hysterical title, it really takes a serious look at how we stereotype each other and fall into a pattern of mimicking heterosexual behavior."

Wanda Alston, a self described political animal, is quick to comment, "This conference is also about politics. We will attempt to set an agenda for black lesbians and gay men. It won't be some grand document, but instead, we will define a few important issues that attendees can then return to their respective communities to act on."

The D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals is the oldest organization in the country still in existence that serves our community. Conference '96 is one of the groups annual projects. For more information about the organization or to register for Conference '96. Please call Everett Hamilton at 202-265-1428 or Rosalind Smith at 301-423-2728.

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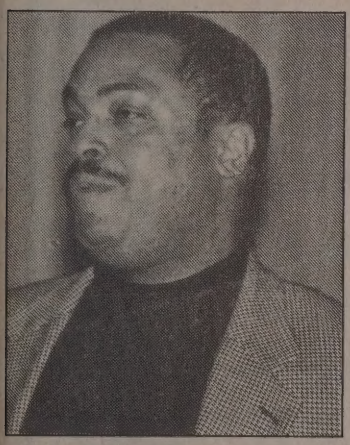
The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

A Hotter Than July Success Story

Detroit-The organizer's of Detroit's first Black gay/lesbian pride celebration have a lot to be Proud of. The action packed weekend featured non-stop fun and food. Co-produced by the renowned Billionaires Boy's Club, A Lorde Collective and The Ladies of



Author E. Lynn Harris

a Current Affair, the event felt more like the '10th annual' instead the first. (The momentum of the 8th annual BBC anniversary dinner is responsible for that!) Stanley Bennet Clay's SBC Magazine presented 'Man of the Year' Awards to several outstanding men including Kick Magazine's Curtis Lipscomb for community service; photographer, Ron Singleton for the Arts; and author E. Lynn Harris for literature.

Braves Announce AIDS Benefit "Stepping Up To The Plate for P.W.A.'s".

The Atlanta Braves have announced that the September 7th game against the New York Mets will be dedicated to those living with AIDS in the Greater Atlanta area. Prior to the game over 300 volunteers from local AIDS service organizations will form a giant human red ribbon on the field while accompanied by choral selections from the Metropolitan Community Church Choir.

Various musicians and celebrities will be on hand to assist in the pre-game festivities and the Atlanta Braves Foundation will follow with a significant contribution to Project Open Hand/Atlanta, AID/Atlanta and the Grady Infectious Disease Program's pediatric unit.

Special tickets to the September 7th game (including pre-game ceremonies) are available for $10 through Project Open Hand/Atlanta at (404) 872-8089. Two dollars of each ticket purchased through Project Open Hand will be used to continue their mission of providing two meals a day, seven days a week to about 500 Atlantans living with AIDS. Group seating is available making this an excellent opportunity for professional or service group outings. For more information contact: James Towers @ (404) 872-8089 X120, Project Open Hand/Atlanta

Black Basement Collective

Atlanta-Black Basement Collective presents Solidarity '96, an African-American festival of music, arts, crafts, food and more. Solidarity '96 will feature the BBC's diverse collection of musical genres and artistic influences. The event is a gathering of Atlanta's African-American Artisans, bridging gaps and changing structures. A collection of Funk, Rock, Reggae, Soul, Hip-Hop, Jazz and Blues, Still Life and Water Colors.

The Black Basement Collective, producers are dedicated to the perpetuation of African-American musicianship and artistic expression. We proudly stage events that utilize African-American talent, business and venues. Come and enjoy the splendor of our diverse community at the S.W.C.C.C. Amphitheater, 1444 Lucile Ave., in Historic West End. Saturday August 17,24& 31, 1996. Vendors, Musicians, and corporate sponsors wishing to be part of the series can call 404-755-3226 for more information or e-mail us at nustyl19@idt.vivid.net.

Gays Abroad

Amsterdam -The School for International Training's (SIT) Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies program successfully completed its third semester abroad in Amsterdam, the Netherlands this past May. The program, the first ever of its kind, represents a unique opportunity for students to pursue interests in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies from a European perspective.

Open to students attending colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada, SIT's program features interdisciplinary seminars on the life and culture of the Netherlands and on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. Lecturers include those

The 411, continued

from the University of Amsterdam and the University of Utrecht in addition to representatives from organizations such as the Dutch Bisexual Organization and GALA, Amsterdam. Lecture topics include

those such as: The Social Geography of the Netherlands, Public Policy as it relates to Gays and Lesbians, Gender and Ambiguity in the 19th Century, and Contemporary Lesbigay Movements in Europe.

As SIT states in its Netherlands: Academic Program Report, "Any college semester abroad program challenges students to explore their own cultural identity, but the Netherlands: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies program provides an extra push in this direction. Gay life in the Netherlands is radically different than what one experiences in the United States, and exploration of this difference challenges students to see how time and place are constructors of their individual and cultural identities. The program uses this personal understanding and motivation to spur larger, more academic areas of learning."

The program fee includes tuition, room and board, international air travel, in-country excursions, and insurance. For more information concerning the Netherlands program, please call the Admissions Office at 1-800-336-1616.

Aids Survival Project Announces LiveWell Fund

Atlanta-AIDS Survival Project (ASP) has announced the formation of the LiveWell Fund to support a diverse set of special projects and initiatives. The fund's first sponsor is Patients Pharmacy, with a $50,000 pledge over five years at Sustaining Gold Sponsorship Level. There are six levels with contributions beginning at $1,000.

ASP is an Atlanta-area AIDS Service Organization that is recognized nationally for its HIV/AIDS Treatment Resource Center, which is considered the best in the southeast United States. Operation: Survival, a two-day retreat designed to provide information and knowledge to empower those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS, is another renowned ASP program. The agency also offers peer counseling, advocacy concerning individuals and legislative issues and community programs, treatment conferences, a monthly publication, support groups, and other important educational services.

Patient's Pharmacy stepped forward aggressively to provide direct community support for AIDS services by helping to launch the LiveWell Fund and by simultaneously becoming the sole presenting sponsor of ASP's "Who's Dining Who?", a fundraising event held in September. AIDS Survival Project is a non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information write or call: Jeff Graham (or) Larry Sheldon, 828 W. Peachtree St. Suite 206, Atlanta, GA 30308; phone: (404) 874-7926 fax: (404) 872-1192

New Church Founded : Circle of Love Fellowship

Decatur-The Circle of Love Fellowship was founded and adopted by Bishop Stephanie Williams and members of C.O.L.O.R. (Coming Out Living Our Reality) on Sunday, July 7, 1996. They are located in the Memorial Bend Office Park at 778 Rays Road, Suite 108. Services begin at 10:00 a.m "While we cannot change the image the world may have of us, we can educate ourselves about the truth of our being as a spiritual entity in this universe" says Bishop Williams.

Bishop Stephanie D. Williams is a native of Baltimore, Maryland, who presently resides in Stone Mountain, GA. She is the proud mother of son. Ordained as a pastor in 1985, and consecrated into the Bishopric in 1993, Bishop Williams founded and pastored the Word of Truth Center Church, Baltimore, MD from September, 1985 to May, 1994(formerly known as Spirit of Liberty Church) an independent interdenominational church.

The Circle of Love Fellowship is a non-discriminatory, Liberationist, Metaphysical/Theological Bible-believing church with a ministry to the needs of the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgendered-Gay-friendly African-American community and people of color and of non-color.

Gay rights activists heckled out of Zimbabwe fair

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Gay rights activists abandoned their booth at Africa's biggest book fair Friday after it was besieged by fist-waving opponents trying to prevent the display of gay rights pamphlets. Roughly 100 protesters kept the activists from showing the pamphlets — which the government has called obscene — despite a second court ruling Friday in favor of the group Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe. "We don't want to turn violent, but these people are violating our rights. GALZ must be completely destroyed. They are here to rearrange the hormones of our youths," said Nixon Nyikadzino, a student.

Gay rights display destroyed

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Demonstrators destroyed Zimbabwe's first gay rights exhibit Saturday minutes after activists staffing the booth fled a jeering mob.

The government had fought to keep Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe out of Africa's biggest book fair, saying its material was obscene. The display was allowed after a judge ruled in favor of the country's only gay organization.

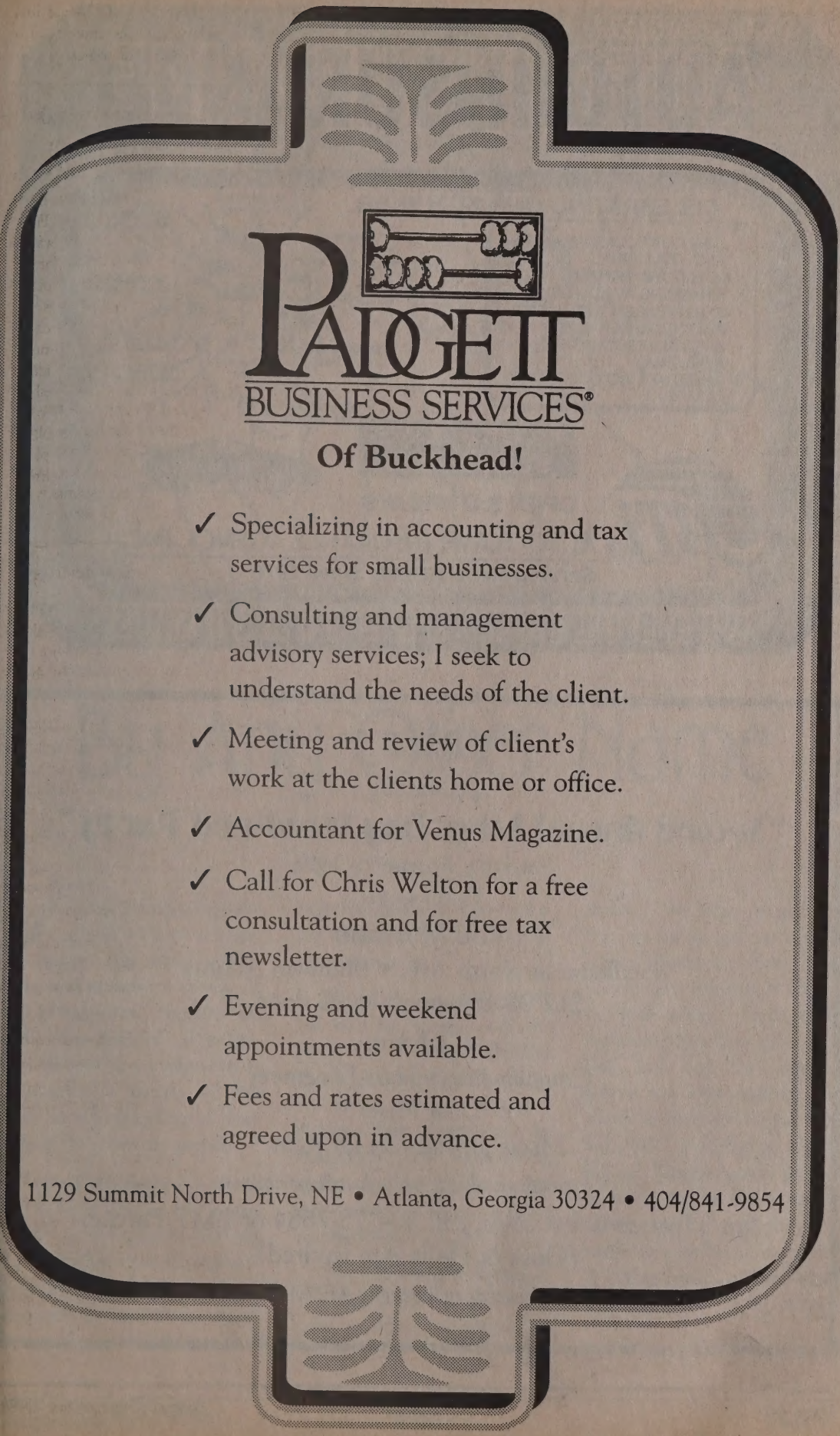
The booth was set up near the back entrance of the hall to allow the activists to escape if necessary.

Activists faced off Saturday with hecklers, including a man who attempted to grab and kiss a lesbian staffing the booth.

The activists distributed information on gay rights for three hours on the last day of the fair, but trouble started shortly before they were scheduled to leave.

Some protesters chanted, "Our president says no," a reference to President Robert Mugabe, who banned the group from the fair last year.

The group decided it had made its point and left early. Protesters then set the pamphlets ablaze and broke up the booth.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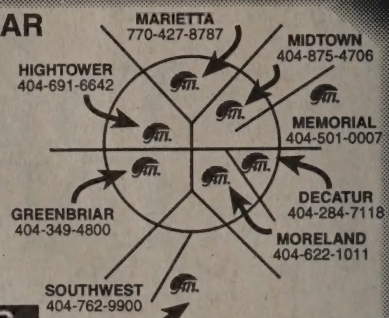

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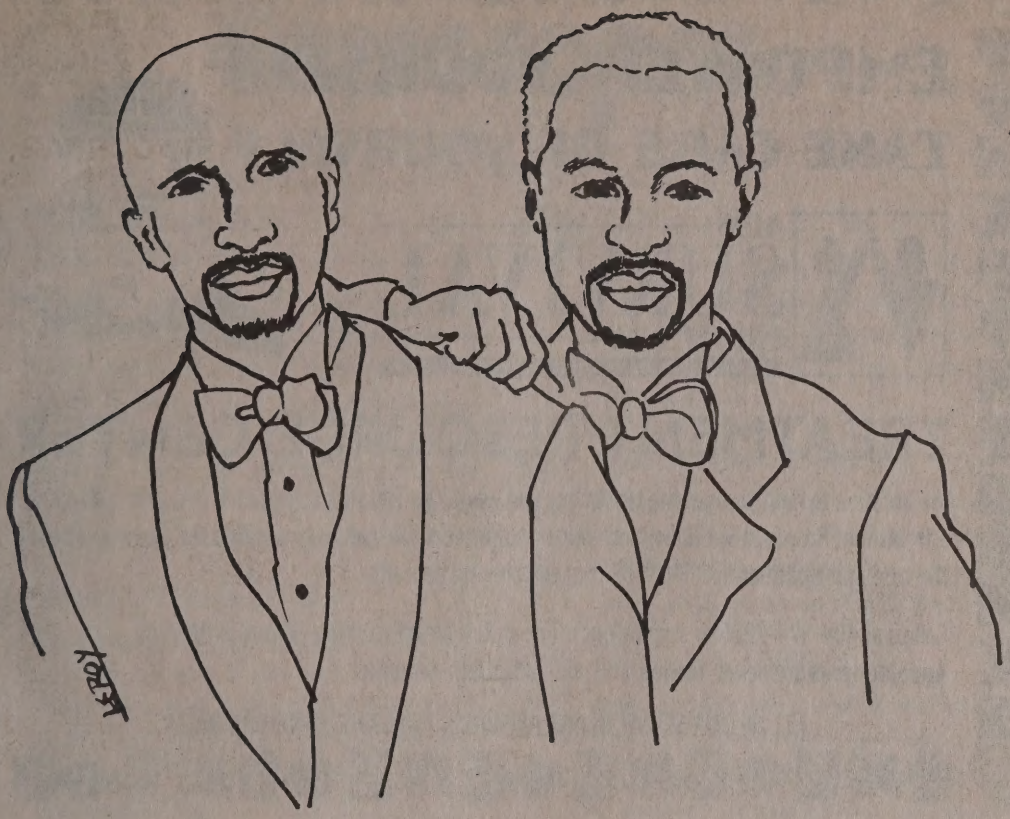

By Any Other Name

by Kevin Isom

I didn't set out from law school to become a gay lawyer. Like sexual orientation itself, it wasn't a choice. It sort of happened. Though I was probably predisposed. Most people, despite the overwhelming abundance of lawyers, see law from the outside looking in. I see it from the other way around.

One of the things I've seen a lot of lately is some very serious goings-on when gay men commit to each other. You can approximate most aspects of marriage by contract. But symbols are important, and one of the things that happens a great deal these days is the changing of names. It's simple in most states.

You can give any dumb reason you want for changing your surname, like "I think Rockefeller sounds good on me" or "I want to be named Stevens because I always liked Samantha in Bewitched." Some people tell the truth, as in, "I'm in a committed relationship, and I want my name to reflect that."

This brings us to the question, why does anyone want his last name to reflect his relationship status? But before we get into that, we should look at the patterns. There are three basic patterns gays are using in changing their names. Most people hyphenate their last names, as in Bob and Rod Paris-Jackson. (Have you ever noticed that they're always mentioned as "Bob and Rod," with Rod as second billing? Perhaps because Bob got to be on top in the surname.) Other people change their last names to something else entirely. A lesbian Jewish couple changed their last names to the Hebrew

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49

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Starscopes

by Dada

Happy Birthday Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

This month don't try to rush things that are not progressing as quickly as you'd like. Although you're happier in a relationship than not, love affairs at this time may be somewhat elusive. When it comes to romance you may find yourself attracted to those who have pride, ambition, and who are somewhat unconventional. Libra, Aquarius, and Cancer play roles.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You're better with the intellectual than purely emotional and not likely to wear your heart on your sleeves. Having an overly critical attitude toward life in general and romance in particular can make you miss out on some excellent opportunities for true companionship.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Now's the time to make the most of your business and financial standing. Take your ideas from the drawing board to the board room. You're good at keeping secrets, especially, how you feel about others. Your love life may not always be as harmonious as it appears.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Resist the temptation to indulge in self destructive behavior when you're feeling depressed. Allow bygones to be bygones. Use your excellent powers of concentration visualization to affect positive changes in your life that you seek.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Your strength lies in your ever present optimism. Learn to value those worse moments of your life and learn from them. Although you usually have a significant other you do much better on your own. Independence is your motto.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Being practical and living in the real world are your strong points. You possess the ability to move forward so you need to gain control over negative thoughts. The solution to a long held problem is close at hand.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Feeling dependent is the type of situation you like to steer clear of. Since you do quite alight on your own avoid hermit-like tendencies. Your misplaced compassion will get you into more trouble than it's worth.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Verbalizing your feelings could be the best way to clear the air. You are feeling quite attractive lately and it comes across to everyone around you. You're in touch with the guiding impulses of your nature and enjoy expressing yourself.

Aries (March 21-Apr. 19)

Tackling some rather important chores for a relative will result in heartfelt gratitude. Don't be afraid to allow your accomplishments to shine through. You enjoy living for the moment and to the fullest.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You seem to be able to handle just about anything which may be thrown in your direction. when you put a lot of faith in those you care for, it's a shock when someone lets you down. Keep your self esteem intact and strive on.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Ongoing relationships are a little strained presently, and new ones are dubious. Just wait it out and things will soon improve. Your outgoing nature allows you to draw friends from all walks of life.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Being quite a homebody, now would be an excellent time to capitalize on any inclinations you have in that direction. It's important to you that your loved one's emotional intensity matches or even surpasses that of your own.

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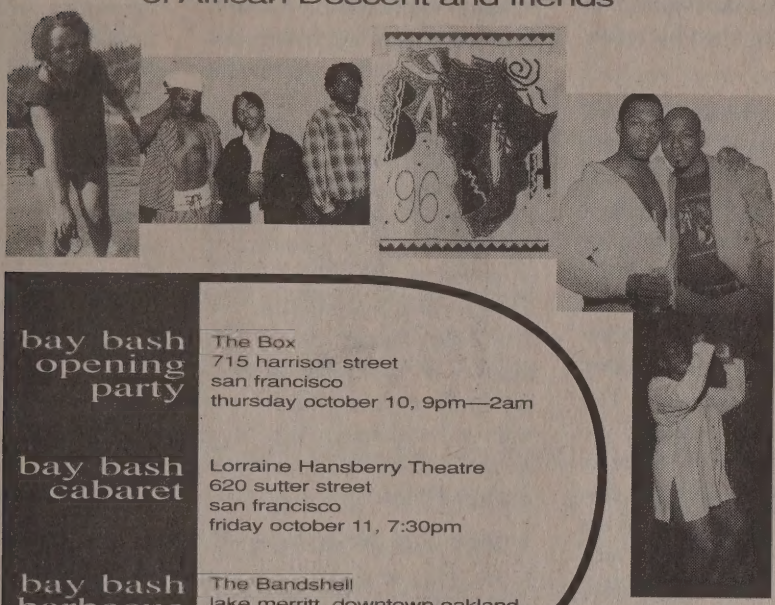

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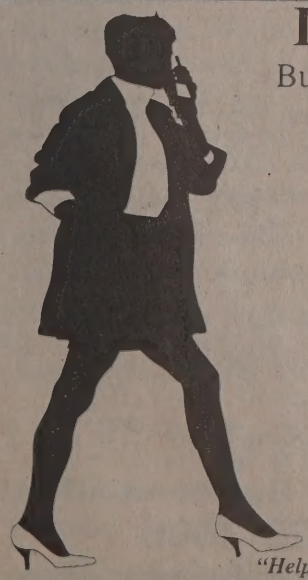

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PERRY WATKINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

He is remembered by GLAAD as a soldier who was asked and who DID tell, and served anyway; who wore his uniform and his drag outfits with equal pride.

expel Perry, and discharged him three years later when his enlistment expired.

Perry fought this decision with the help of the ACLU over the next several years in Watkins v. U.S. Army. In 1989 a federal appeals court ordered him reinstated to active duty, reasoning that if the army drafted him and repeatedly re-enlisted him knowing he was gay, then they couldn't discharge him for being gay. The Justice Department appealed the decision but the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case and let stand the decision of the lower court. Perry thus became the first openly gay serviceman to defeat the ban against gays in the military. He settled his suit with the Army, agreeing to forgo reentry to the military in return for back pay, honorable discharge, full retirement benefits, and a promotion to sergeant first class.

Perry's groundbreaking story was told in a 1994 documentary co-produced by New York's Chiqui Cartegena, entitled "Sis: The Perry Watkins Story." The film will be shown during Black gay Pride week in Atlanta and will run on Saturday Aug. 31 at 2:00pm at the Host Hotel, Holiday Inn Airport.

Perry went on making public appearances around the country, talking about his experience in the armed forces. Nothing so clearly and irrefutably displayed the Army's hypocrisy around its gay and lesbian policy as Perry's case.

On March 17, 1996 Perry J. Watkins died of AIDS-related complication in his home in Tacoma, Washington, at age 47. He is remembered by GLAAD as a soldier who was asked and who DID tell, and served anyway; who wore his uniform and his drag outfits with equal pride. He was a courageous role model for gay men and lesbians not only in the military, but in all parts of society.

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BY ANY OTHER NAME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

word meaning "hope." Which, while touching, could lead to a series of gay couples named Sunshine, Nirvana and Peace.

And finally, still others follow what some would see as a more "traditional" model. One partner changes his name to the last name of the other. This third model can be very convenient in overcoming some sorts of red tape—if you go to the hospital and you have the same last name, everyone assumes you're related, so they're less inclined to kick your lover out of the emergency room.

The problem with the "traditional" model is its origins: in property. Most people don't realize that until about the last hundred years or so, marriage was a property deal, and names reflected that fact. A woman was legally her father's property (hence she bore his last name), and upon marriage she became her husband's property (hence, she was forced to take his last name). Not exactly Barbara Cartland, when you think about it.

So the question comes to mind, why would gays want to change their names to follow in the exchange-of-property tradition? Is this a tradition that we want to be a part of? Or think about this: since there's no legalized tradition of property exchange/marriage for gays, then is it somehow better when we change our names as an expression of love and commitment to each other?

I can't really answer to those questions, at least not without offending the straight world in its entirety, but I can describe some real-life experience. Like the name change I did for the life partner of an Atlanta social worker, Richard Alston. On the day of the hearing at the courthouse, Richard waited in the corridor while his life mate and I went into the judge's chambers. I couldn't tell who was shaking more, Richard or his partner.

When the hearing was over, we went back out into the corridor, and I announced, "Richard Alston, I'd like to present to you James Matthew Alston." They embraced and kissed there in the corridor of the Fulton County Courthouse. My eyes began to tear up, and I looked quickly down at my case file, blinking hard to hide the tears. After all, it wouldn't do for a client to see his lawyer cry.

Or then there were the clients who had met each other on the gay rodeo circuit (a rather amazing phenomenon, rife with comic potential). Bob and Earl wore matching boots and cowboy hats to their wedding, and a Clint Black look-a-like sang a country wedding march. But on the day of the hearing, only one of the two showed up at the courthouse. The other was sick. As the elevator doors closed, the one confided to me that in fact his partner—I think he actually said "pardner"—had AIDS, and that they had known that he was HIV+ for two years before the wedding.

My heart sank as the elevator climbed to the fifth floor of the courthouse. There was no embrace this time outside the judge's chambers, but I put my arm around my client as we walked back to the elevator. The point of all this is not the Bob and Rod who's-on-top debate or the eternal honey-will-we-wear-spurs-to-our-wedding question. It's the outward indicia of two human beings joining themselves together as a team to embrace tomorrow.

It's hope and love and commitment and a desire to be together for the future. Traditional values, by any other name.

Most people don't realize that until about the last hundred years or so, marriage was a property deal, and names reflected that fact. A woman was legally her father's property (hence she bore his last name), and upon marriage she became her husband's property (hence, she was forced to take his last name). Not exactly Barbara Cartland, when you think about it.

Kevin Isom is an attorney and writer in Atlanta.

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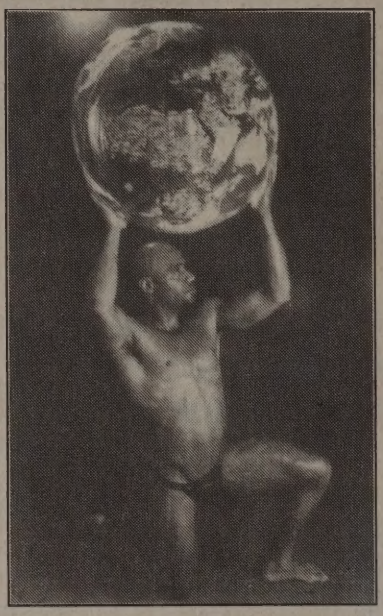

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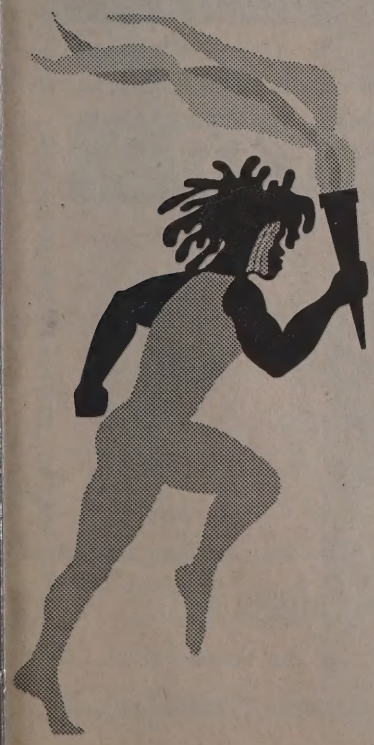

AUG. 27-SEPT. 1

Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Week—In The Life Atlanta, Venus Magazine, Adodi Muse, Think It's Not When It Iz, and Second Sunday hosts PRIDE IS POWER '96. See Black Gay Pride Pocket Guide on page 12.

Contact numbers: ITLA Pride line 404-872-6410. Host Hotel, Holiday Inn Airport, $65 sing/dbl 404-762-8411. Venus Magazine info line 404-622-8069. Adodi Muse info line 404-525 521-2515. Think It's Not info line 770-808-3984. Second Sunday info line 404-325-7321

OCT. 10-13, 1996

Bay Bash '96, San Francisco—Thurs: Opening Party, The Box, 9 pm-2 am; Fri: Cabaret, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, 7:30 pm; Sat: BBQ, Lake Merritt, Downtown Oakland, 1 pm-6 pm; Sun: Sunset Cruise, Sausalito 5 pm-8 pm. For info call 415-922-5156

NOVEMBER 1-3, 1996

Phoenix, AZ Divas in the Desert—Fri: Bid Whist National Tournament, Lexington Hotel, 7:30 pm; Sat: Mr. and Ms. Hot Body Picnic at Roosevelt Dam & Lake, 12 noon; Sat: Disco Dance & Diva Contest, 9 pm. For info call 602-978-6219

OUT & about

L-R, poet, Queen; author, Joan Fountain; publisher, Charlene Cothran; actress, Debra Dukes; image consultant, Joy Barnes; and graphic artist Phyllis Robinson all enjoyed the National Black Arts Festival's opening after party gala at the Occidental Grand Hotel.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

The 'Atlanta Delegation' plans to attend the 10th Anniversary Convention of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, in L.A. in February 1997.

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The WomenFest Brunch Fashion Show at Alexander's
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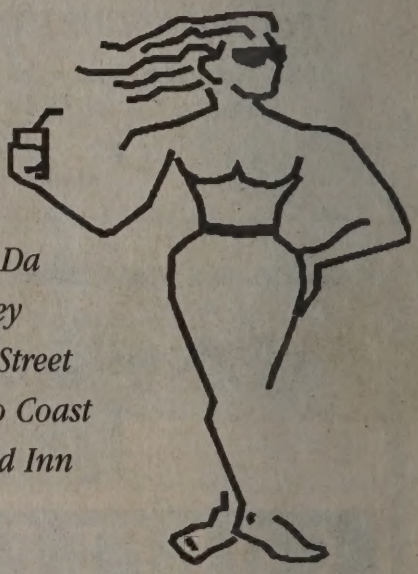

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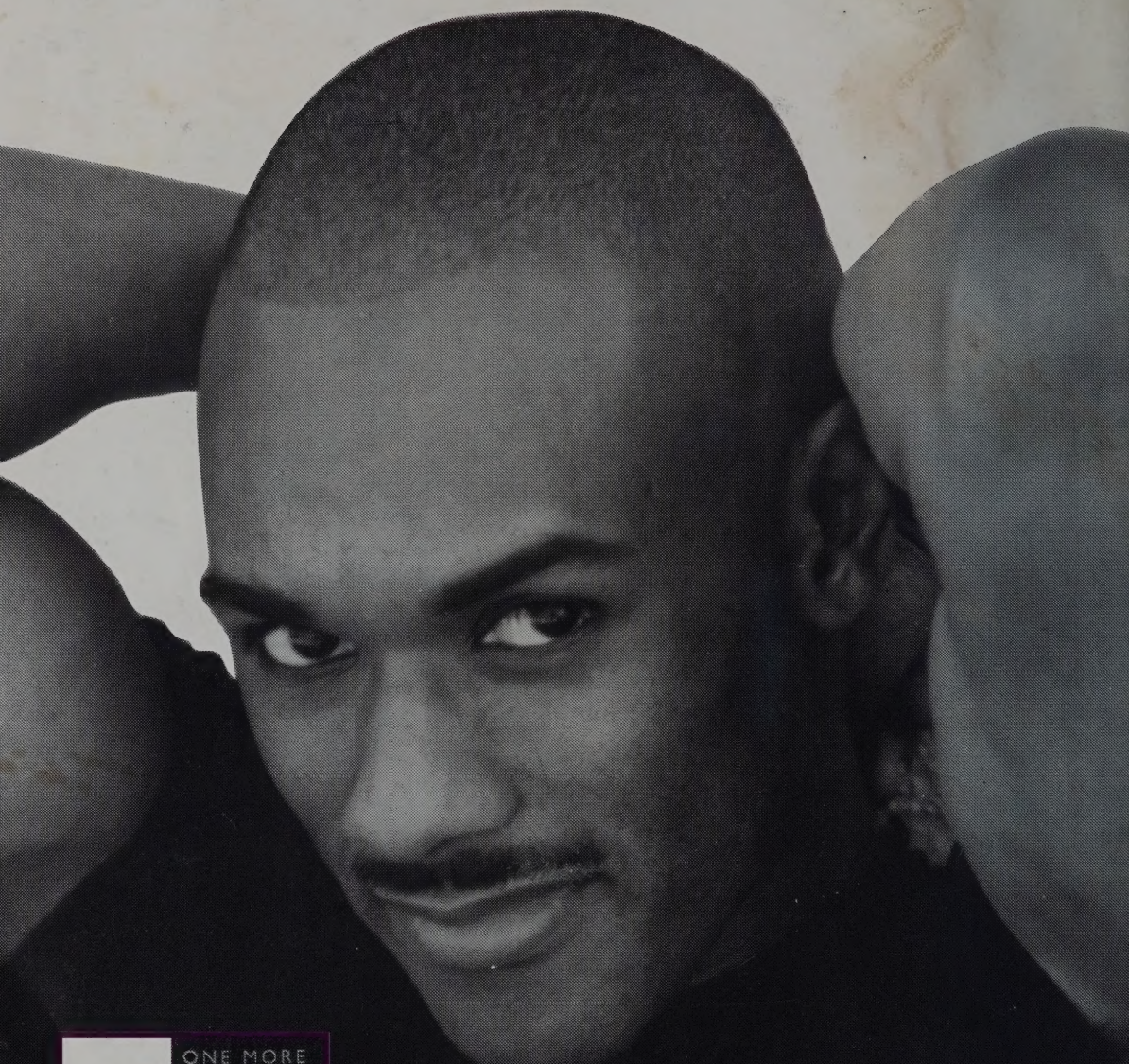

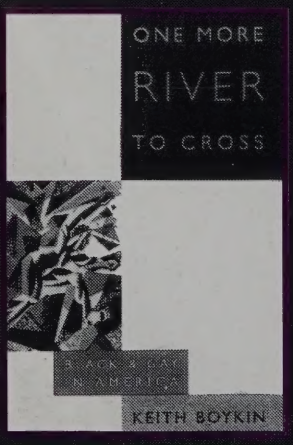

The Book:

One More River to Cross

By Keith Boykin

Executive Director of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum

August 31, 2 p.m. - Shrine of the Black Madonna Books

September 1, 7:30 p.m. - Outwrite Books

Venus™

June 1996

MAGAZINE

FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

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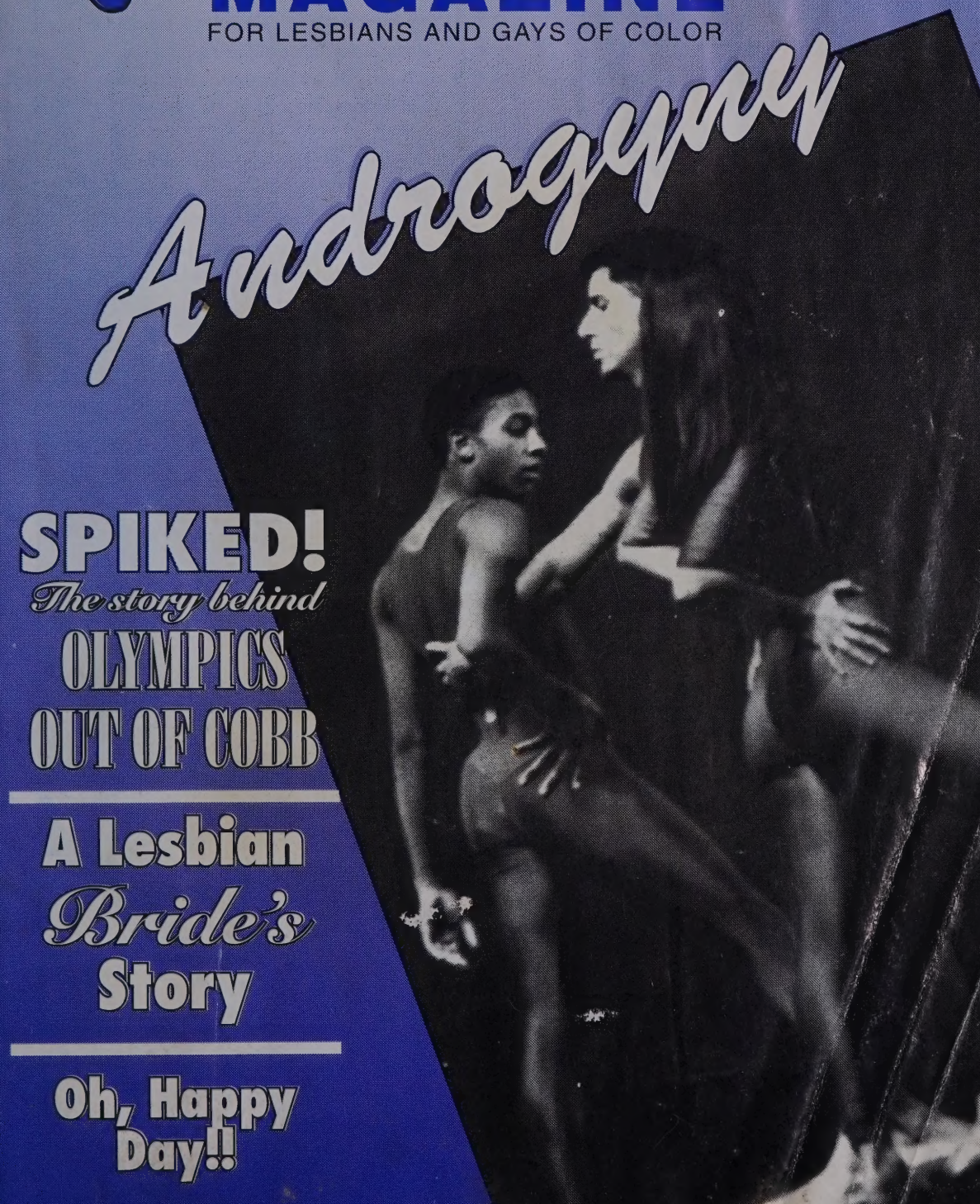

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**No names will be taken; reservations are for seating purposes only.*

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR:

It was truly a pleasure being a guest at the fund raising Barbecue for Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. Aside from the beautiful atmosphere, the delicious food and candid conversations which covered a plethora of topics including the latest issue of Venus, Freaknic, HIV/AIDS treatments, racism and the guest of honor's political platform, I especially enjoyed Congresswoman McKinney's heartfelt remarks exclaiming the immeasurable contributions made by gay men, bisexuals and lesbians.

I support Congresswoman McKinney with my dollars and my vote because she is tough, tenacious and thoughtful and I believe that she can make a difference in our lives... in fact she already has.

Chip Williford
Decatur, GA

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you so much for bringing us Venus. It's full of excellent info and articles. I really enjoyed reading and sharing it with everyone else. Keep up the good work! I'm hooked!

Oren Smith
New Orleans, LA

DEAR EDITOR:

I just wanted to take a moment and thank you for the wonderful service you provide our community. Because I can't "come out" right now, your magazine's importance in my life is even greater... providing a bridge between sanity and despair. Keep up the great work and keep those presses rolling.

Anonymous
Opelika, AL

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

June 1996
Vol. 2., No. 6

Editor in Chief	Charlene Cothran
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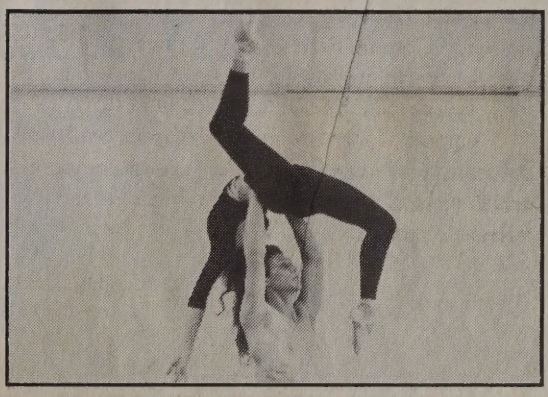

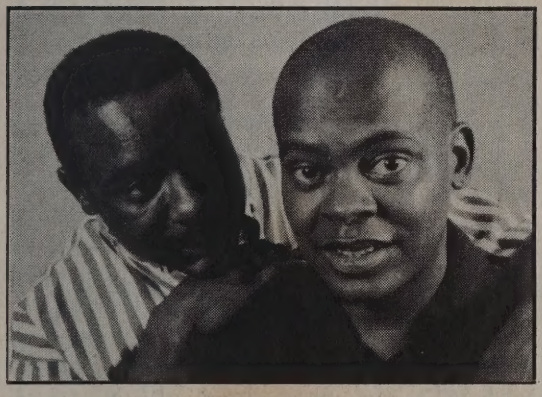

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

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Olympics Out of Cobb: The Inside Story

The unlikely duo who led the fight have written a book — and not everyone who was involved is amused by their version of events.

By Richard Shumate

Jon-Ivan Weaver and Pat Hussain were a decidedly odd couple when they joined forces in 1994. He was baby-faced neophyte to gay politics, more likely to be taken for Joe Prep than Luke Sissyfag (at least before the latter's Christian conversion.) She was a loudly outspoken veteran activist, frequently self-described as a "pissed off black dyke."

Activist authors Jon Ivan Weaver and Pat Hussain.

In fact, Hussain recounts that when Weaver, whom she didn't know, first approached her to get involved in the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition, she refused. "I've been deserted on more than one occasion by a white man," she says. Once she did agree to join Weaver as co-chair, she recalls telling her partner, Cherry, that if Weaver cut and ran when things got hot, "I'll cut his heart out and feed it to him."

He didn't, and she didn't. And in the course of their successful fight to get the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to move volleyball competition and the Olympic torch run from suburban Cobb County (whose governing board has officially condemned the "gay lifestyle"), the two became fast friends.

Olympics Out of Cobb, Spiked!, a new book self-published by Weaver and Hussain, is the story of that emerging relationship—and much more. It is also takes readers behind the scenes of the battle the two Atlantans led for more than two years against incredible odds. Using reconstructed dialogue, they reveal the details of their negotiations with top ACOG officials, including the news that anonymous supporters within ACOG were secretly supplying them with help and information.

"The impetus to write this book is to tell our story. Too often, we as lesbians and gay men don't tell our stories, and it was important that another one of our stories wasn't lost," says Hussain. "It shows that if a ragtag bunch of queers can take on the Olympic community and win, then we can do so much more in our own community."

The book also tells very personal stories of the stresses that leading an activist crusade put on Weaver's business and both of their relationships. Indeed, Spiked! is dedicated to their partners, Diego Sans and Cherry Hussain.

Among the newsiest tidbits in the book: Weaver and Hussain recount how a top Olympic official used anti-gay epithets and issued a veiled threat against Weaver in a phone conversation with his partner. An ACOG official with whom they were

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From The Editor

It's PRIDE time again! Each year the concept of celebrating Gay and Lesbian Pride changes a bit for me. My connection to the overall season of celebration grows stronger. My emotions run deeper. Why has this grown to be such a special time? What am I so PROUD of?

When I think back to the very first Atlanta Pride Festival that I attended 4 years ago, I can clearly recall my buddy Venus insisting that I come and join in the march. She was shining up her truck that morning for the parade, full of hope that she could ad some flavor, chocolate that is, to the scene. I chuckled as she admitted that after all her efforts to gather a people of color contingent she was sure that the only brown faces marching or riding down Peachtree would be her own and a few faithful AALGA members. Curiosity and her enthusiasm got me as close as the Kinko's on 5th and Peachtree where I just happened to be running off some flyers when the floats began to pass by. I eased outside and stood next to Kinko's door trying to look like an innocent bystander when I suddenly caught a glimpse of Venus' truck.

There she was partying down Peachtree, with a truck full of gorgeous brown, black and red men and women. Blasting her favorite "I Am Every Woman," the joy in their smiles and waves seemed to draw more of us into the street. As Venus' truck passed by Kinko's I made the connection. My cloak of shame dropped and I stepped out of that garment as I left the curb that day. It was a grand afternoon. The memories are very special.

So, What am I PROUD of this year? I'm proud that my mother shared Venus for the first time with my aunt and her best friend. I'm proud that my sister, whose opinion of gays & lesbians a few years ago was, let's say less than favorable, consistently distributes Venus to other students in her writing classes and more importantly I'm proud that she invited me lovingly to come out to her two sons whom I adore. I'm proud that my 12 year old nephew asked my permission to present Venus to his teacher at school. (Kids are sharp! Yes, he knew all along!)

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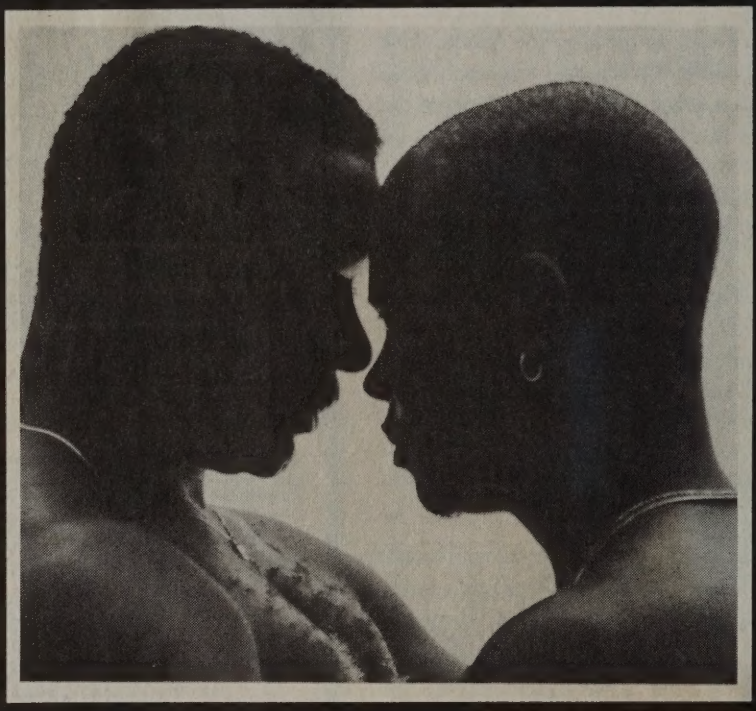

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ANDROGYNY

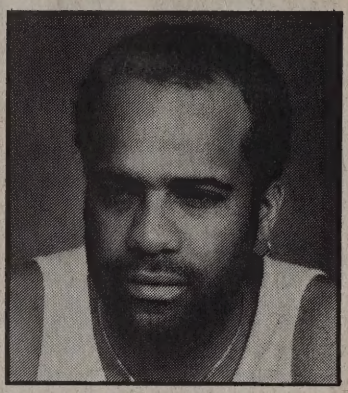
An Interview with Alex Pelham

Since civilization began, society has premised its goals and dreams on the pursuit of love, compassion and self-actualization. Clearly the performing arts provides an invaluable tool for enabling any healthy, functioning society to achieve these ends. In turn, society utilizes the arts to reflect the emotional and mental plight of the human psyche, rendering it pure and beautiful.

In support of these artistic endeavors, Kolours Dance/Atlanta aims to produce bodies of work that challenge its audiences, while effecting a unity and cohesion seldom encountered in the arts community. "Androgyny", the new ballet by Kolours Dance demonstrates that division destroys, and that by simply recognizing our similarities we ameliorate our ignorance and embrace and reconcile alternative perspectives.

J. Alex Pelham, artistic director and founder of Kolours Dance/Atlanta, originates from New York City and began his dance training at the age of seven with famous Broadway choreographer Henry LeTang. By age eleven, Pelham toured Japan, appeared in numerous television specials and commercials, and performed the original role of "The Tap Dance Kid." After ten years with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Pelham accepted full scholarships from both the Martha Graham School and the world renowned School of American Ballet. He has performed with various companies, including the Newark Dance Theatre and Fred Benjamin Dance Company. He has also performed the works of Talley Beatty, George Faison and Igal Perry. Pelham also graduated magna cum laude form Clark Atlanta University where during his matriculation, he taught classes in contemporary technique in and around the city, creating a demand for his choreography.

Kolours Dance/Atlanta is eight members strong, with dancers from American Ballet Theater, Metropolitan opera Ballet, International Ballet Rotaru and Hungarian National Ballet. The company repertoire consists of over twenty ballets, including the beautiful "New Birth," and multifaceted "Catalyst." "Androgyny" will premiere on Friday June 21, at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday June 22, at 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. at Pace Academy Fine Arts Center located at 966 West Paces Ferry RD. For tickets call 404-724-0928.



J. Alex Pelham, artistic director and founder of Kolours Dance/Atlanta.

Venus: The piece seems to reflect your interest in the politics of diversity.

Alex Pelham: This piece is not just about men who look like women, women who look like men or people who are genderless. It's any two stereotypical opposites that have become a hybrid of each other. Someone who's black and someone who's white, someone who's tall and someone who's short, someone who's running for the president of the USA, and someone who runs the Mafia. To me it's an understanding, "androgynist," the term is centered around understanding someone who may be a little different than you. Allowing

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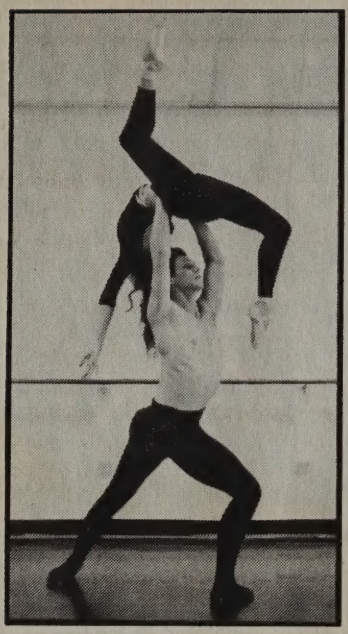

Androgyny

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people to be who they need to be, so they can be happy and make their own contributions to society. This piece is about communicating, objectivity, sharing, and the fostering of human relationships.

VM: As a youngster you trained with some of the most highly respected choreographers in the world. Who has inspired you most?

AP: Alvin Ailey, because of the obstacles he overcame, (mainly racism) he was a pioneer who endured through adversity and conflict, both personally and professional. Having studied there and danced with the company, I was given a chance to grow and expand artistically, with some of the most talented and professionally inspiring dancers in the world. I am very grateful to the excellence Mr. Ailey exposed me to at a young age.

But there were others: Donald Byrd, Louis Johnson, Walter Ramsey and a few others who were incredibly talented, and did not allow racism to stifle their creativity.

VM: Who inspires you most in everyday life?

AP: I would have to say that would be me. I don't believe you can inspire or motivate anyone else, unless you can create that same effect for you. I inspire me! You have to have something for yourself first before you can share it with anyone else, and expect the relationship to be successful, professional, romantic, or platonic.

If you don't have something that is uniquely yours, that only you can give to someone else, then you're really not giving your life any meaning. You have to start within, and then you can move outward and inspire others.

VM: Why the company name KOLOURS?

AP: It's a philosophy; it represents the diaspora of different views. The infinite nature of myself and the dancers that come under the KOLOURS umbrella. KOLOURS is about exploration, not limiting oneself. It's important to incorporate any and all cultures that make up who you are in your work, if for no other reason for the humanistic benefits. There's nothing wrong with representing someone else or an alternative point of view from you own: that helps you with objectivity as well as makes you a better person.

Performing for a 90's audience requires you to do work that is about issues that are prevalent to them and provocative enough to make them think. They need something they can relate to and hold on to as well. Art can be so much more than just fantasy; more than "The Nutcracker." KOLOURS represents that as well.

VM: You co-direct eight highly skilled company members with Elaine Wadsworth. What does she bring to the work

AP: She's my right hand. She runs rehearsals when I'm not there, and she is a fabulous actress, so she helps the dancers bring emotions to the extremely physical demanding work we perform. She gets the dancers to become the movement as opposed to just technically doing the moves. This helps the audience to see the dancers' passion for the dance, which is important, because if the dancers aren't feeling and don't express it, then the audience won't get it.

Her acting ability and her maturity are her greatest assets. I'm working with her to get her directing skills up to where they need to be. we also share a lot of the same beliefs and philosophies on creativity and artistic impression; that helps us keep the vision for the company focused.

VM: What is it that you hope the audience will take with them after seeing "Androgyny"?

AP: A heightened respect for others and increased self worth. It's OK to be who I am and it's OK for you to be who you are.

The Story Behind Olympics Out of Cobb: Spiked!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

negotiating also told them that the Olympic movement's own surveys showed as many as 40 percent of the athletes competing in the Olympics are gay or lesbian.

So far, those revelations haven't created much of a stir in Atlanta. What has caused tempers to rise, however, are descriptions by Weaver and Hussain of obstacles they feel were put in their way by people within Atlanta's gay/lesbian community. Coming in for particular critical mention in the book is the Cobb Citizens Coalition, an anti-resolution group formed by gays and lesbians who live in Cobb County.

Weaver and Hussain (who live in the city and not Cobb) write that they got very little support from the Cobb Citizens Coalition, whose leaders are characterized as viewing Olympics Out of Cobb as too radical. The Cobb group is also portrayed as willing to support a compromise that would have allowed Olympic volleyball to remain in Cobb by changing language in the anti-gay resolution without rescinding it.

"Someone's penchant for drama has superseded the facts," says Elaine Hill, who was then co-chair of the coalition and is singled out by name in the book. "Anyone who has followed the activities of the Cobb Citizens Coalition and myself knows that we would not compromise by allowing anti-gay language to remain in the resolution."

"The Cobb Citizens Coalition supports and applauds the efforts of the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition. However, our focus is broader," says Hill. "Our community has different styles and opinions, and that is positive. If fact, that should be expected."

As the book has circulated through Atlanta, Weaver says what has generated the most comment is his description of a conversation between he and some other activists over his attire. He says he was chastised for wearing his "Olympics Out of Cobb" T-shirt to negotiating sessions with ACOG, instead of a suit. One of those doing the chastising was Carl Lange, former executive director of GLAAD/Atlanta, who spent a great deal of time doing media relations work for Olympics Out of Cobb.

"I just have a problem with the whole intent of this book," says Lange. He maintains that coalition meetings were supposed to be confidential discussions where people could be comfortable throwing out a variety of suggestions for discussion—and that coalition members agreed not to reveal their discussions to people outside the group. (Weaver says his understanding was that the confidentiality agreement was only designed to keep ACOG from learning information and only applied to the period when negotiations were taking place.)

The book has caused so much intra-community strife that GLAAD/Atlanta is planning to host a forum in order to allow Weaver, Hussain and others mentioned in the book to discuss their differences. No date has been set.

Both Weaver and Hussain insist their intent was not to grind axes with people with whom they had difficulties during their fight.

"But I don't think you can tell a story like this and not tell what happened within the community," says Weaver. "Our attempt was not really to characterize what people did but just to say what people did and let readers draw their own conclusions."

Weaver says he also hopes the book will outline for future activists what strategies proved most effective.

"I think the biggest lesson we learned is to be very focused. There were so many times when we could have been sidetracked into different issues. But we just kept our focus on getting the Olympics out of Cobb," says Weaver.

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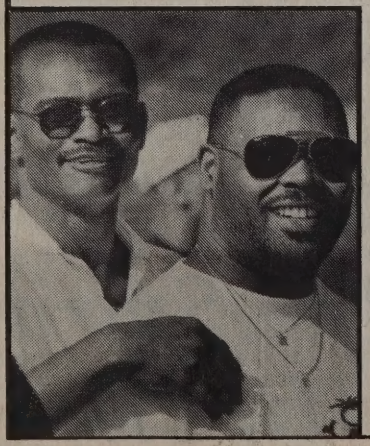

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Name:. . . . . Lenore M. Rivers

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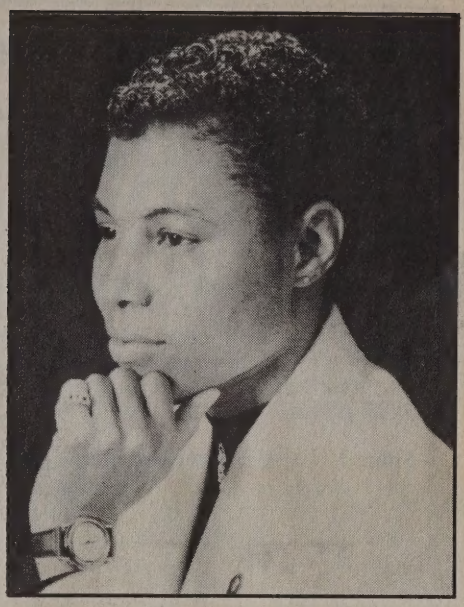
Status: . . . . . Single

Career: . . . . . Prevention Specialist and Photographer

Hometown: . New York, NY

Latest Book:. "Pearls of Passion: A Treasury of Lesbian Erotica" by C. Allyson Lee and Makeda Silvera



Lenore resides in Los Angeles and serves as the program coordinator of the AIDS prevention team's "Womyn Love 2" erotica series, a project of the NBGLLF. Lenore is also working on a 1998 calendar of gorgeous African-American Lesbians. Co-founder of Black S.A.B.L.E., Inc. and Le GEM Productions, Lenore is busy preparing to host a soul food brunch and showcase extravaganza in Hollywood on July 4th Weekend!

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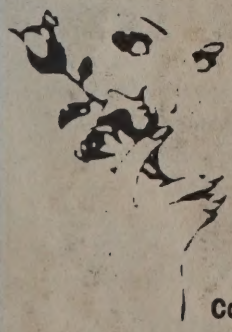

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Viatical Settlements

Help When You Need It

by M. Bryan Freeman

After the diagnosis of a terminal illness, it's quite understandable and normal to feel scared, depressed and confused. Along with these feelings comes the realization that life may change drastically and can include disability, large medical bills and a decreased quality of life. Still, through appropriate support, a healthy attitude and medical miracles, the prognosis may brighten.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

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This can mean money for the payment of medical bills, house payments or a decent quality of life that many of us take for granted. The term "viatical settlement" is new, but the concept has been around for a few years. Prior to 1989, most of what we call viatical settlements were set up as private transactions arranged by individuals. Today, the process is simpler, with the advent of viatical settlement companies. Companies like mine act as brokers, working with an individual to find an investment company that will pay the highest amount possible for a policy.

A viatical settlement broker takes the work out of the process for the individual. Personally, I try to streamline the process by having the policyholder complete only one set of paperwork instead of many different ones. We can then provide a preliminary answer as to how we think your policy will sell, including the amount you may receive and when those funds might be available. We also like to ensure that our clients are completely comfortable with the transaction—they can back out at any phase of the process.

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Along with its devastation, AIDS certainly has taught us important lessons about working together and finding new ways to help those in need. Fortunately, one of those solutions—a bright spot of hope on this sometimes overwhelming landscape—is the viatical settlement.

M. Bryan Freeman is the founder and president of Benefits America, the South's oldest gay-owned and operated viatical settlement firm. He is an advertiser and friend of Venus

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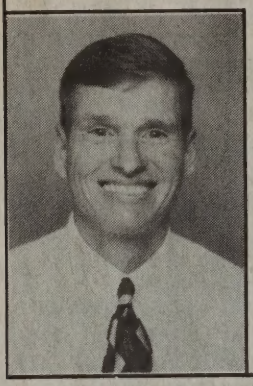

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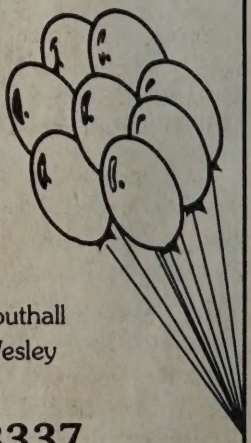

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Miss Atlanta Pride 1996

Niesha Dupre pictured.

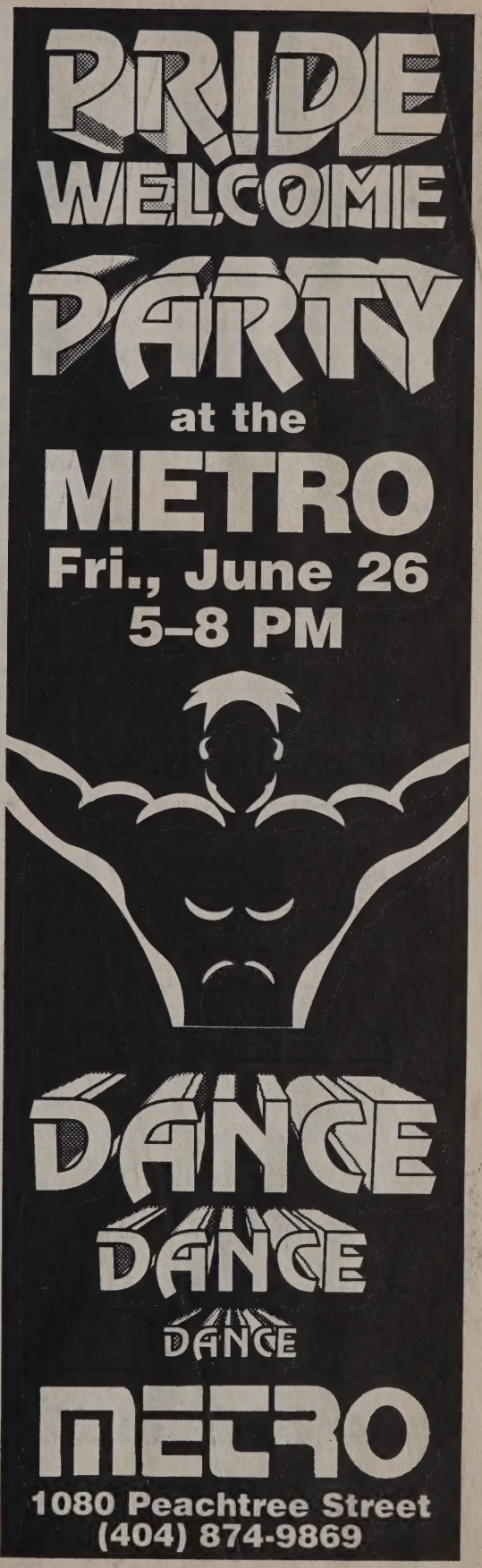
Miss Atlanta Pride 1996 is an official fund raiser for the Atlanta Pride Celebration and is sponsored by Brushstrokes. Glamorous female impersonators from around the Southeast will gather to compete for the title and $1700.00 in prize monies. The theme of the pageant is "Pride in Oneself."

Brushstrokes is sponsoring this pageant to help the transvestite/transsexual community feel more a part of Atlanta's Gay and Lesbian pride celebration.

"It is our way of thanking them for their fund raising efforts and their fight for gay rights," says Tom Schloeder, Co-owner of Brushstrokes, "they have always been the most visible part of our community."

Mark Jackson adds, "The TV/TS community has often been neglected during gay pride. We wanted an event to honor them and what they have done for our community."

The pageant is being hosted by the Armory and is sponsored in part by Etcetera Magazine. It will be held at the Armory (836 Juniper Street) on Monday, June 17, 1996 at 9:30 P.M. Admission is $5.00 and all money raised will benefit the Atlanta Pride Celebration.



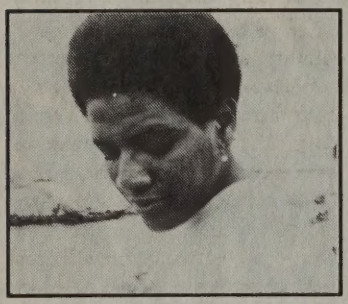
The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

A Litany for Survival:
The Life and Work of Audre Lorde Airs Nationally June 18 on PBS

'The work of the poet within each one of us is to envision what has not yet been and to work with every fiber of who we are to make the reality pursuit of those visions irresistible'

—Audre Lorde



New York—Poet, lover, mother, warrior—Audre Lorde is a fiercely passionate American visionary. Her poetry and prose speak to her deepest convictions—love and anger, civil rights and sexuality, family politics and the glories of nature. She gave voice to a political generation and became a role model not only for Black women but for everyone who believes, as she did, the "liberation is not the private province of any one particular group." In 1992 Lorde lost her battle with breast cancer but she leaves behind a rich and vital legacy. A Litany for Survival, a powerful profile of African-American Audre Lorde will air nationally Tuesday, June 18 at 10 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings), as part of P.O.V., Positive View Point, broadcast television's only continuing forum for independent non-fiction film.

"Audre Lorde has been a pioneer in making available her voice as a teacher, a survivor, an activist, and a crusader against bigotry," says filmmaker Ada Gay Griffin, who made A Litany for Survival with co-director Michelle Parkerson. The two spent eight years collaborating with Lorde, weaving together a richly textured portrait of a gifted, strong-willed woman who embraced life's moments and focused her energies to fight for civil justice, women's equality and lesbian and gay rights.

SpeakOut

Washington—Emerald City Productions, ECP, presented the third annual showcase of Black Gay and Lesbian Writers and their work. Regarding this year's event, Terry W. Sydney says "ECP recognizes the need to celebrate and embrace writers in our community. 'SpeakOut II,' gives the community and its writers the opportunity and stimulus for dialogue. The focus of this year was "Community through Unity," as it pertains to literature; specifically the impact of black gay literature and the bridges it crosses between the gay and heterosexual community. The program began with dramatic presentations dedicated to Audre Lorde, Essex Hemphill and Arthur Johnson. Reading in 'Speak-Out II' were Stanley Clay, founder and publisher of SBC; Rodney McCoy Jr., poet; Sabrina Sojourner, author of Psychic Scars and Other Mad Thoughts; Michael St. Andress, performance artist; Jalal Naeem, poet; Rebecca Helem, performance artist, poet; Terry Sidney, playwright, producer and performance artist; B. Michael Hunter, editor; and, Robert Reid-Pharr, English Scholar at Johns Hopkins University.

Kids Have Their Own Fun at Pride!

Atlanta Pride is very pleased to announce the best Youth and Family program we have ever had. Co-chairs Amber Feldman and Kristy Jo are both experienced children's theatre specialists. Activities throughout the weekend will include performances on stage, a storytelling tent, an art area and a special section for families in the Pride Parade.

Bill Lansden for Georgia Senate Seat 39th District

Atlanta—Local businessman Bill Lansden is running for the 39th District Georgia State Senate Seat. Mr. Lansden stated that, "as a proven business owner I am able to bring the skills necessary in business to the state legislature. For too long politicians have acted unresponsively and with callous disregard for small businesses and the neighborhoods they serve. We need a state senator who will serve to encourage business development in established commercial areas, who will protect

our neighborhoods and who will be responsive to the social needs of our diverse 39th District. I intend to be a visible, active State Senator."

Ruth Waters and Phill Wilson, NBGLLF Co-Founders receive Founder's Award from organization Co-Chairs, Vallerie Wagner and Stephan Oxendine.

Catalog of HIV-Related Standards of Care

New York—Community Prescription Services (CPS), the nation's only HIV+ owned and operated mail order prescription service, announced the publication of its most recent issue of INFOPACK, a resource-filled AIDS treatment newsletter that is distributed FREE of charge to AIDS service organizations, health care professionals, clinics and individuals nationwide. Free copies of the INFOPACK are available by calling 1-800-842-0502 or em: info@prescript.com.

HRC Welcomes Passage of Ryan White Care Act

Washington—The Human Rights Campaign expressed relief that Congress has finally passed the Ryan White Care Act, a long-overdue measure that will provide $738 million for the care and treatment of people with HIV and AIDS. HRC played a key role in nullifying an amendment to the bill, proposed by anti-gay Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., to prohibit federal funds from going to gay organizations that "encourage or promote homosexuality." The Helms amendment was replaced by language proposed by Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., that prohibits the use of Ryan White money to directly promote intravenous drug use or sexual activity, either hetero- or homosexual.

New Leather Club Formed for Men of Color: Onyx

Chicago—A new social club has joined the SM, leather, fetish community in the Windy City. ONYX/Chicago. The primary purpose is to provide an informational and social outlet for African-American, Latino and Asian men and their friends involved or interested in the leather/SM/fetish scene. As the numbers of men of color participating in various leather events increases, the organizers felt the need to form a group that would support and promote inclusion within the leather community-at-large. The first event was a trip to the Mid-Atlantic Leather Weekend, hosted by The Centaur MC in Washington, DC, over the MLK holiday weekend. Needless to say, a good time was had by all. To contact, request membership information or to be added to the mailing list for invites write: ONYX, 1340 W. Irving Park Rd., #188, Chicago, IL 60613.

Ministers Interviewed on Gay and Lesbian Life

Atlanta—The American Friends Service Committee has recently published the results of interviews of 43 local clergy from a Listening Project. The surveys show that views on the acceptability and reasons for homosexuality vary greatly. One third expressed attitudes that persons of different sexual orientations should be accepted and welcomed. "Homosexuality is a unique gift to the Christian community." More than a third thought gays and lesbians should be welcomed, but that homosexual behavior should not. "Judgment is God's, not ours." Less than a third emphasized the sinful nature of homosexuality and their inability to accept unrepentant homosexuals. "I would feel the same about them as I would about a child molester. I wouldn't want them in my church." The summary report of the project, which is not a scientific survey but does represent a broad cross section of the religious community, is available upon request. (404)-586-0460

People of the world who will "Listen, Think and Act" at this year's PRIDE rally include Keith Boykin,(pictured), Coretta Scott King, and Rev. C.T. Vivian. Sunday June 30 at 1 p.m. in Piedmont Park.

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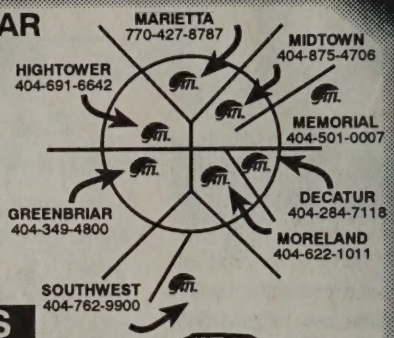

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Benita and Lolethia Got Married...

A Lesbian Bride's Story

Nearly one year ago, on July 1,1995, Lolethia Annise Chapman and Benita Fern McShan were joined in marriage. That one statement seems to elicit an auto-recoil response in a lot of people.

"Two women can't get married." "It's not legal." "Its not right." "You don't have to do that!" Hearing comments along those lines wasn't surprising to me. Hearing them from gay men and lesbians was.

We live in a day and age where no one has to get married. With the help of science, virgins can give birth and the children of the unmarried can be legitimized at the court house. No law prevents a couple from taking whatever joint name they wish and their property can be shared and be held to our promises even if there is no legal marriage. No, we didn't have to get married. We wanted to.

My bride and I didn't just sit down one day and decide to get married. The decision was more of a realization that each of us had found in the other the answer to a life time of prayers. The decision to marry was a manifestation of our spiritual and personal growth.

The decision was not difficult. Fulfilling it was. We wanted to have a wedding because, in its purest form, a wedding is a public declaration before God and the world of the committed relationship between two individuals.

We wanted to have a church wedding because we wanted the support of our church in sustaining our marriage. Relationships, whether homosexual or heterosexual, are difficult. We don't delude ourselves in thinking that we will always be able to handle this relationship thing by ourselves. We agreed to a prenuptial interview and counseling as part of our planning for the ceremony.

The day our fathers walked us down the aisle was the ultimate coming out experience for them and us. By our marriage we announced our intention to live together as one, forever. We announced our joy, our pride and our faith in the future. Our fathers announced that they loved their daughters.

We do not consider ourselves, the traditional, stereotypical Ozzie and Harriet couple, nor do we see our selves as symbols or martyrs of gay consciousness. I did not officially come out to most of my family members until I

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

PRIDE 1996

Wednesday June 26

7:30 PM INTERFAITH SERVICE-
ABUNDANT GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH
Rev Paul Turner with special guests "The Gospel Girls"
(404 815 0036)

Thursday June 27

7:30AM-9:00AM MEDIA BREAKFAST-
MARY MAC"S TEAROOM $10 buffet breakfast, Leaders of local lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender organizations are invited. Donna Redwing, GLAAD Field Manager and Bruce Hayes, Olympic Gold Medalist will attend
(404 892 7372)

Friday June 28

•11:30AM PRIDE PROCLAMATION-
CITY HALL Mayor Campbell will present the 1996 City of Atlanta Proclamation to the Pride Committee. The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus and the Paris Gay Men's Chorus will perform.

•7:30PM COMMITMENT CEREMONY-
PIEDMONT PARK Rev John Hankins, Sr. Pastor of All Saints Metropolitan Community Church will perform the ceremony. Certificates to participating couples, Reception follows. Sponsored by: Atlanta Couples Together
(770 971 8581)

•8:30PM AIDS VIGIL-
JOHN HOWELL PARK a tribute to the memories of those no longer physically with us.
Sponsored by: The AIDS Survival Project (404 874 7926)

•7:00PM "THE BELL BOTTOM BALL" -$3
PIEDMONT PARK-*THE DANCE TENT* NEW this year its Seventies Night at the PRIDE Festival's Dance Tent!
(Tent Sponsor:Backstreet) Event Sponsor Delta Lambda Phi

the prideline 770 662 4533
ATLPRIDE@aol.com HTTP//:users.aol.com/atlprid

Saturday June 29

•8:00AM PRIDE RUN/WALK-
GRANT PARK $12 by June 7th $15 thereafter.
Applications at Phidippides and Southern Voice.
Proceeds benefit The Lesbian and Gay Funding Initiative.
Sponsored by: Front Runners (770 623 5007)

•8:30AM HOTLANTA Volleyball Tournament-
PIEDMONT PARK top of the hill by 10th street,
4 person/double elimination, A, B, and B. $40 Team
Sponsored by: Hotlanta Volleyball
(404 371 9957)

•10:00AM FAMILY REUNION 6

•Pride Market Opens-
PIEDMONT PARK join The 1996 Pride Festival's morning program especially geared for children . Clowns, face painting, Children Theatre! Entertainment on the Pride stage begins at 10 Am & continues until 10 PM. The Pride Market has over 250 booths representing, local and national artists, action organizations, political candidates, and many service groups.
Come Out! and Become Involved!

•8:00PM "The Gay Men's Chorus-CONCERT
THE ATLANTA CIVIC CENTER, The Annual Pride Concert with special guests, The French Gay Men's Chorus, $25 admission
Sponsored by: the Gay Men's Chorus (4304 876 5372)

Sunday June 30

•12:00 NOON The PRIDE MARCH-
CIVIC CENTER MARTA STATION Assembly starts at 10:30. The numbers Count so come and March with your favorite group!...There will be over 30 Floats and 50 Organizations to March with....
People of the World: LISTEN, THINK ,ACT!

•10:00AM Pride Market Opens

•1PM-4PM The PRIDE RALLY-
PIEDMONT PARK-THE PRIDE STAGE Join the expected crowd of over 200,000 and Listen to our fatted entertainment' "The Indigo Girls", Keynote speakers include, Coretta Scott King. Sean Sasser, Rev CT Vivian, Rev Mel White, Keith O Boykin, Dawn Averitt Doherty, Mike Nelso, Nancy Rodriguez

•7PM The STARLIGHT CABARET-

A Memorial to Amber Richards
PIEDMONT PARK-THE PRIDE STAGE , The South's most glamorous entertainers perform for you well into the night! Bring a picnic dinner some candles and enjoy this evenings tribute to a true Atlanta heroine! ....Following the show The PRIDE FIREWORKS display, closes out this years Festival.

The Atlanta Pride Committee Inc. is nonprofit organization and contributions made to it may be tax deductible

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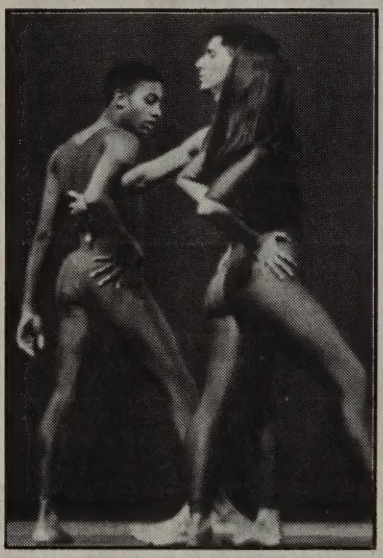

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EMPLOYMENT

Georgia Equality Project (GEP), a statewide political group working for equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people, seeks a dynamic, experienced Executive Director to assist the Board of Directors in leading the organization. Applicants need proven track record in state politics, fundraising, and grassroots organizing. The position is based in Atlanta and requires statewide travel. If interested, request application from GEP Search, 302 Steppingstone Court, Statesboro, GA 30458. GEP is an equal opportunity employer.

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OUTREACH Workers needed to provide education at Gay night spots. Work late evenings and weekends. Must be dependable and dedicated. Great pay! PLWAs preferred. AESM 404-753-2900

Massage Therapist Needed for alternative service. Call 742-5596.

Volunteer Coordinator position now available. Can you recruit others for the cause? Do you have typing and computer skills? Do you like working with people? Then this is the job for you! Fax resume ASAP to AESM @404-752-9610

Female Illusionist needed to promote HIV/AIDS awareness in the African-American gay community. Will train, flexible hours. We Need You! Call AESM 404-753-2900

SEMINARS

Gay Men's Seminars on spirituality, sexuality and self-awareness. First Friday evening of each month. Facilitated by Franklin Abbott, LCSW and Stacey Blake, LMSW 404-874-8294, Ext. 1.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers needed for Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Visitor's Center. From May 15-Sept. 1. Call 770-677-9883 for volunteer application or pick up at Charis or Outwrite.

HIV PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP. Persons interested in membership on the Metropolitan Atlanta HIV Health Services Planning Council should contact the office of the Chairman of Fulton County Board of Commissioners at 404-730-0191 prior to August 15, 1996.

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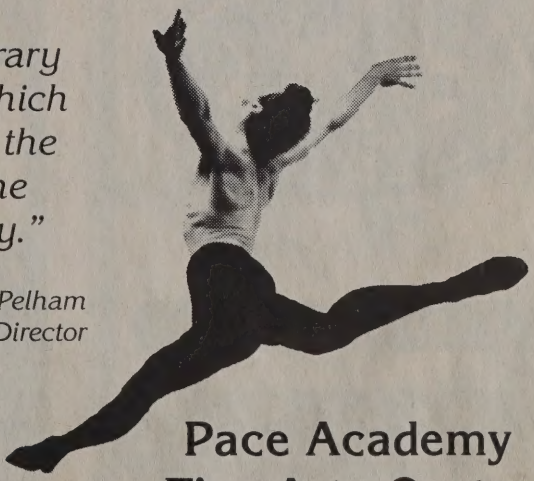

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:. . . . . Jay Buxton

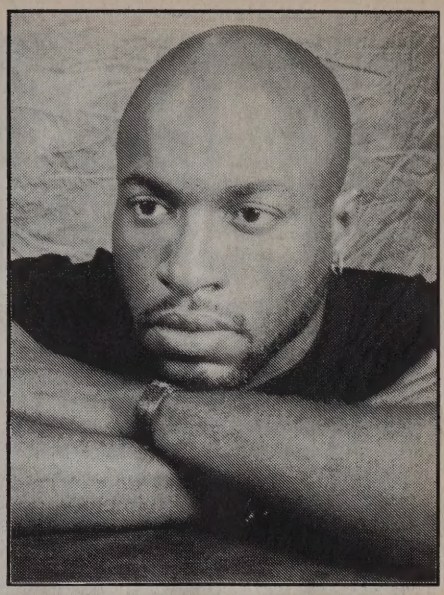
Age: 28

Status: . . . . . 'Involved'

Career: . . . . . personal trainer and counselor

Hometown: . Gary, Indiana

Latest Book:. "Give Me a Cool Drink of Water Fore I Die" by Maya Angelo



Jay enjoys traveling, listening to jazz and playing bid whist! Currently living in L.A., he works as a counselor for the NBGLLF. As co-founder of Black S.A.B.L.E., a production company who's aim is to promote and strengthen the bond between Black lesbians and black gay men, Jay is looking forward to seeing "black sisters and brothers loving one another".

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AESM

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Ask Marian

New York Advice columnist, Marian Farrah, has joined the Venus Family!! From London to Trinidad, from Canada to Detroit, Marian has lived, seen and heard it all! So when you have questions about relationships, whether they be about love, friendship, family, coming out, your job, sex or the lack of sex, just do what we do...Ask Marian!

Dear Marian,

I am a 28 year-old man living in Alabama. I just broke up with my lover after 2 years. I feel so depressed, and so alone. My friends tell me to move on and find someone else, but I don't feel like I can trust anyone ever again. How do I move this feeling?

Dear Lonely,

What you are feeling is very important. Your feelings are telling you that you were hurt and need healing. This is a good time to get to know yourself better. Ask yourself what do you want from life? What are the things that are most important to you? Make a list, check it twice then pin it up on your wall. Make sure you can trust yourself to listen to what you want. When you do that no one can ever leave you feeling so empty again. You will be full of the life that you are creating for yourself!

Dear Marian,

I want to know if there is something wrong with me. I have been living with this woman for four years but we never seem to have sex anymore. I don't know whether or not I am a lesbian. Is this what it's supposed to be like?

Dear Need-some,

NO! NO! NO! If you are feeling like something is wrong, then something probably is wrong. It' s very clear that you are not having your sexual needs met. The real question is what else do you need that you are not getting in this relationship? Think about it. If you are worried enough to write to me, you need to tell her how you feel. Remember that it is important to fulfill your life in a way that makes YOU feel real.

If you have a question for Marian just drop her a line at: E-mail: Venusmag1@aol.com or write ASK MARIAN-VENUS MAGAZINE P.O. Box 89238 Atlanta, GA 30312

A Lesbian Bride

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

was ready to post wedding invitations.

Both of our families surprised us with their showing of love and support. My wedding taught me that much of the animosity and condemnation I had learned to expect from the world was of my own creation. Alternately, I projected condemnation outward, and in turn, made response to my own projections. For many years I separated myself from a loving family because I was not able to love and accept myself in the way that they showed me they did.

Not every one will understand or support us in our decision to marry. Those people are entitled to their opinions. Mostly, we've received acknowledgment and respect from those we have allowed to share in our lives.

If you live with, sleep with, and love someone, and the only reference you have for that person is "my lover" or "my friend" with your own words you have not dignified or acknowledged the relationship.

People understand what you mean when you say this is "my wife" or "my husband." These are not code words. People do not walk up to anyone and say negative things about his or her husband or wife. Our marriage and our families will get no respect until we hold them in honor and salute them in respect.

I chose to acknowledge my love. In doing so, I affirmed what many people and the media ignore about us. We gay and lesbian people have families and pride, and concern for the community, ambition, and a spiritual capacity that allows us to host the spectrum of human attributes that contribute to our being real people and citizens of the planet. We have the ability to love and to make commitments.

By jumping the broom at the end of the ceremony we acknowledged both our lesbian and African heritage. Those students of history will recall that once upon a time in America it was illegal for Negroes to marry. We were, the law declared, unfit and due to our subhuman and immoral natures incapable of committing the bond of holy matrimony. Lolethia and I, as legacies of those slaves who claimed their human right to choose their own life partners, claim our right to do the same.

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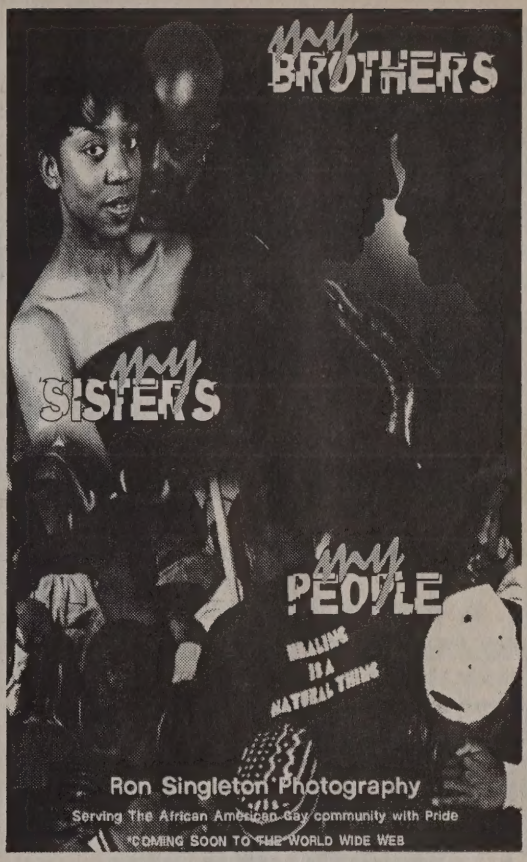
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Ron Singleton Photography
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Starscopes

by Dada

Happy Birthday Gemini! (May 21-June 20)

Look closely at a relationship to see if it offers compatibility, respect and mutual reciprocation. Major changes are on the horizons, possibly one of residence. Important decisions are better left until after the 21st of the month, when clarity is sharper and temperaments are milder. Scorpio, Aquarius, and Libra play important roles.

Cancer (June 21- July 22)

Increased ambition and professional responsibilities have you on a never-ending treadmill. Others are willing to provide the support you need to attain your goals. A Pisces is particularly sympathetic.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

You may find yourself being called to counsel, mediate, or just lend a listening ear. Use leadership abilities to settle a dispute. Harmony and teamwork are the key.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

An urge to splurge may set you back a pretty penny. Remain focused on a budget. Choose to express feelings through a creative medium such as writing, music, or photography.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Management and organization featured. Delegate extra authority to others and relax A trip to the country, or small party for friends, helps you unwind.

Scorpio (Oct. 23.-Nov. 21)

A reunion with someone from your past proves an unexpected surprise. View current affairs with a critical mind. Mix variety into daily routine.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Try to see another's point of view. Meet deadlines and keep commitments. Open communications eases misunderstanding.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Efforts at self improvement gives rise to a new you. Set time aside for inner reflection. Become involved in a community project.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Indulge in a hobby that is both fun and mentally challenging. Push forth ideas now, others are receptive. Success comes through personal initiative.

Pisces (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)

Highlights on family and real estate. Don't let petty annoyances hinder progress. Use intuition, follow through on hunches.

Aries(Mar. 21-April 19)

Desire for excitement keeps you on the go. Deal with concerns surrounding transportation. Take time to finish what is started.

Taurus(April 20-May 20)

Focus on revising financial revenue. Romantic opportunity may come with one of maturity. Selfish motivations can lead to loss. If you know your rising sign read that too..

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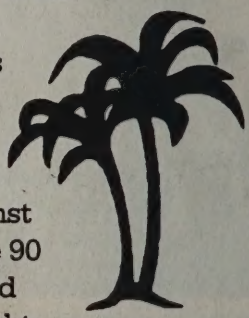
Hundreds of civil rights that come with marriage are about to be extended to same-gender couples by the courts of Hawaii. Yet political and religious extremists are politicking to crush this historic progress for gays and lesbians. Make a simple commitment to stand up against this bigotry. Take 90 seconds to defend our newfound rights and call to contribute today!



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$5.00/call, 18+

Each call makes an automatic contribution of $5.00. You may elect to contribute up to an additional $20. Your contribution will be added to your phone bill. Your contribution is not tax deductible.

Friends of Hawai'i Equal Rights Marriage Project

a nonprofit corporation assisting in education and advocacy defending legalization of same-gender marriage

P.O. Box 11690 Honolulu, HI 96828

Have your friends and family call

Our campaign has been endorsed by these national organizations:

ASTREA NBGLLF
GLSTN NGLTF
HRC PFLAG

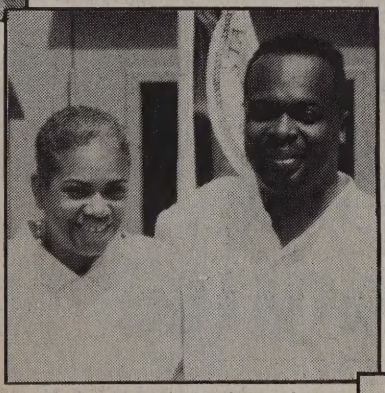
Oh, Happy Day!

HRC Board of Governors memer Laurey Demorest speaks at rally.

The U.S. Supreme Court acted in the true interest of justice by overturning Colorado's discriminatory Amendment 2, said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national lesbian and gay political organization.

"This decision is an outstanding moral victory," Birch said after the court ruled 6-3 that the measure violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law. "And this triumph is especially important in light of the congressional gay-bashing, which has reached an all-time high in the last few weeks." Birch noted that this decision does not advance equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans. "It merely ensures that Colorado—and every other state—cannot pass laws to deny gay and lesbian Americans equal access to the democratic process," she said. "But it also makes clear that this Supreme Court will not permit any state to attempt to pass laws making its gay residents second-class citizens."

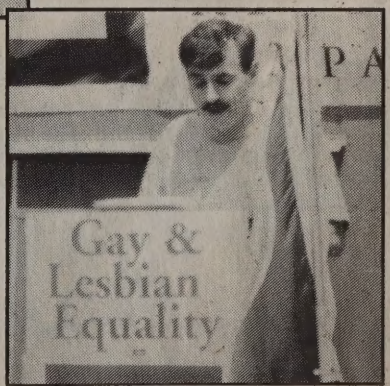
Birch said in a statement released after the decision, "The U.S. Supreme Court's stunning ruling in the Colorado Amendment 2 case is without question a reason for our communities to celebrate!! It is an undeniably hopeful sign that six members of the generally conservative court did not buy into the extremists' cant that we are seeking special rights, rather than the same basic civil rights that others take for granted."



Badili Jones and Sandy Lark at Ammendment 2 Rally.

"But the court's ruling is also a clarion call for gay men and lesbians—and our families—to redouble our efforts this election year, because if we don't muster our collective might to elect fair and reasonable people at every level of government, the religious political extremists will prevail."

"The court's decision is important to the future of gay and lesbian Americans because the six justices who ruled Amendment 2 unconstitutional indicated quite clearly that they are open to considering extending other protections to us, in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations, for example. We must not squander that possibility. The more fair-minded people we can elect at the state and federal levels, the better are our chances of passing legislation that will extend us those basic protections. "



HRC's Don George proclaims victory

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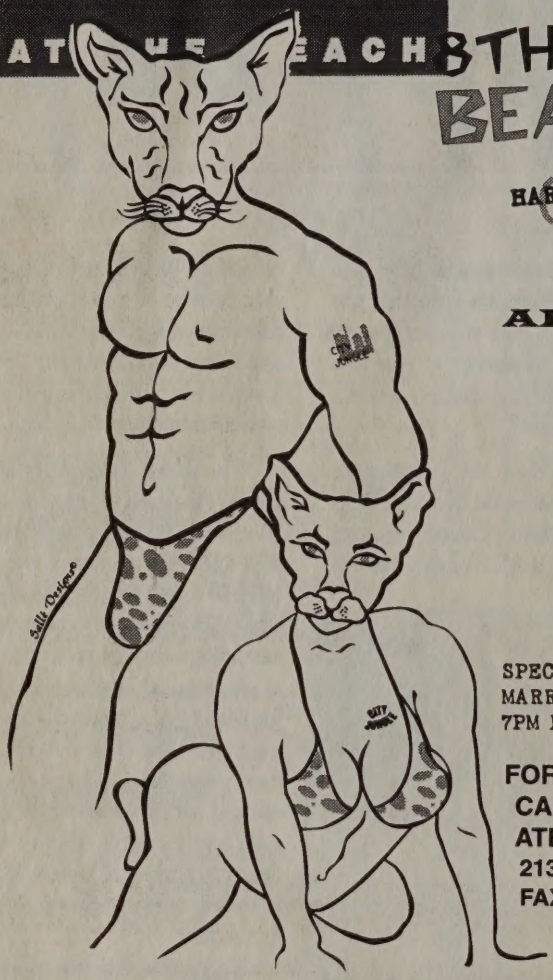

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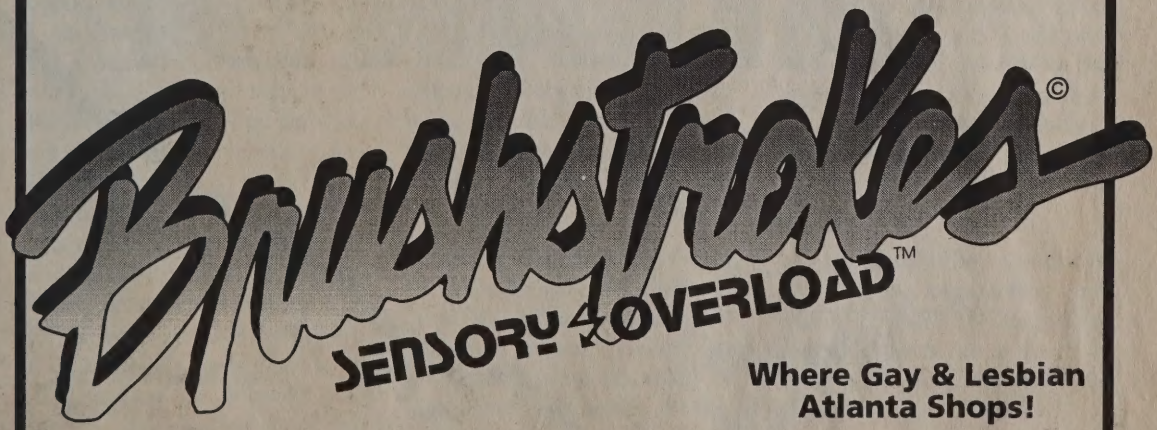

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The Hard Work Of *Inclusiveness*

Sharon J. Lane

In order to continue discussions on "Racism in the Gay and Lesbian Community" forum and to give the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus due credit for work we are trying to do to battle oppression, I am submitting this article to share my personal perspective with the greater community in an open discussion. I encourage others who are struggling with issues of white middle class domination of Gay and Lesbian organizations to respond.

As an African American Lesbian Feminist and a singing member of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus for six of the past nine years, I am compelled to share my personal struggle with issues of oppression and exclusiveness that I've confronted as a result of singing with AFWC this season. At a time in my life when I am learning to fight against racial, sexual, homophobic, and economic oppression, some of my AFWC sisters asked that the chorus respect and honor their Christian religious convictions. "Let me raise my voice in song to praise my God," one African American woman said to me. When confronted with this cry for religious freedom for a religion I personally deem to have excluded me in its patriarchal imagery of the supreme power and its systematic exclusion and subservience of women over the centuries, I was taken aback.

I remembered the Africans who were brought to this country; stripped of language, culture, family and religion, who adopted Christianity and adapted it to serve our own spiritual needs and purposes. The words sung and spoken were similar to those of the "Euro-God" but the personal spiritual experience was fundamentally different. We African descendants sang the words of the so-called Negro Spirituals as we labored in the fields of our oppressors and communicated the details of the underground railroad schedule in code under the auspices of Christian worship. We saw our salvation, our "Black Jesus" as our strength and power which would "take us away from this place." I began to consider how proud and honored I would be to sing these songs and educate an audience, as I was, about the hidden meaning of much of this music and the seemingly subtle but actually poignant differences between "White Christ" and "Black Jesus."

And so the discussion of freedom of religion and the challenge as to how inclusive our feminist women's chorus could be, branched in to a discussion of racial diversity for some. For me, I asked myself if we were ready to embrace our diversities whether

racial, religious, sexual, or economic in nature. Employing the feminist process, the chorus body gathered for late nights and with much pain and loss of sleep. We chose to sing to the God of our Christian sisters as a gift to them. We chose to sponsor anti-racism workshops to begin to educate one another about cultural differences between our black and white and brown members and to begin to expose to the sunlight the insidious disease of racism, which is hidden from those who are born in to the cushioned comfort of white privilege.

I am proud to be a member of this evolving organization and wanted to share my struggle for personal growth as a result of being in this group of increasingly diverse women.

Join the National Black Arts Festival

on *Venus Night* at the Theatre!

Friday, July 5th, 1996

14th Street Playhouse

7 p.m. Zora Neal Hurston
8 p.m. Skin and Ornaments

Take Your Pick! Each Show $12.50

DANCE

Ronald K. Brown/ Evidence
$12, King Chapel, Morehouse
June 29th, 8 p.m.
June 30th, 3 p.m.

A Conversation with Katherine Dunham
July 1st, 7 p.m., $12, SCS Grand Ballroom C

Local Dance Companies
July 2nd, 8 p.m., $12, King Chapel, Morehouse

Blast From the Past & Deep Down Soul
July 3rd, 8 p.m., $12, King Chapel, Morehouse

Love Poems to God
$12, King Chapel, Morehouse
July 5th, 8 p.m.
July 6th, 3 p.m.

The Big Dance
July 6th, 9 p.m., $5 SCS Hotel

Sapphire is an African-American poet and writer and out-lesbian. Her work has appeared in nuerouse journals and anthologies. Call the NBAF hotline for an update on this performance location and time at 404/730-7315.

FILM

The Life and Work of Audre Lorde

Daughters of the Dust

The Third Eye of Zora Neal Hurston

The Lost Documentaries of Zora Neal Hurston

FOLK ART

NBAF Auburn Ave. Street Festival
June 29th–July 7th, Free, Auburn Ave.

LITERATURE

An Evening with Maya Angelou
June 29, 8 p.m., $18, Symphony Hall

Gwendolyn Brooks & Sweet Honey in the Rock
June 30, 7 p.m., $25, Symphony Hall

POETRY READINGS

Tom Dent, Mari Evans, Kalamau ya Salaam, Ruth Foreman, Angela Jackson, Felton Eaddy, Kamaria Muntu
July 1st, 8 p.m., $5, SCS Grand Ballroom C

Haki Madhubti, Kevin Powell, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange, Eugene Redmond, Robert Price, Pamela Plummer, Asha Bandele
July 2nd, 8 p.m., $5, SCS Grand Ballroom C

Thulani Davis, Amiri Baraka, Amina Baraka, Askia Touré, Jerry Ward, Alice Lovelace, Tony Medina, Jabari Asim, Andrea Wren
July 3rd, 8 p.m., $5, SCS Grand Ballroom C

VISUAL ARTS

NBAF Artists Market
June 28–July 7th, FREE, Greenbriar

National Juried Exhibition of African American Art
Georgia State University

"For the Love of Dolls" Doll Art Exhibition
Colony Square Mall

Bearing Witness: Contemporary African America Women
Museum of Fine Art, Spelman Coll.

Beyond Category: Musical Genius of Duke Ellington
Robert Woodruff Library

Looking at Ourselves: Mask/Face Identity
Africa House

Roland Freeman's "I've Known Rivers"
Auburn Avenue Research

THEATRE

Having Our Say
June 26th–July 6th, Alliance Theatre. All shows 8 p.m. except additional Matinee performances June 29th, 30th and July 5th at 2 p.m. and Matinee only July 6th at 3 p.m.

Jelly Roll! The Music and the Man
14th Street Playhouse. June 29th and 30th at 7 p.m. July 1st at 8 p.m. Matinee June 30th at 2 p.m.

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill
14th Street Playhouse. June 29th–30th. Matinees at 3 p.m. Shows at 8 p.m.

A Huey P. Newton Story
14th Street Playhouse. July 1st & 2nd at 8 p.m. July 3rd and 4th at 3 p.m. July 5th at 10 p.m.

Skin and Ornaments
14th Street Playhouse. July 5th and 6th at 8 p.m.

Zora Neal Hurston
14th Street Playhouse. July 2nd and 3rd at 8 p.m. July 4th at 3 p.m. July 5th at 7 p.m.

MUSIC

Abbey Lincoln/Odetta
June 29th at 8 p.m. at the Rialto. $20

Dou-Dou 'Niaye and the Royal Drummers of Senegal and Drums of Fire with Mor Thiam
June 30, 8 p.m. Auburn Ave. Free

Black Rock Coalition
July 3rd at 8 p.m. at the Roxy. $15

Celia Cruz with Jose Albert "El Canario"
July 5th at Auburn Ave. Free

David Murray Big Band with Butch Morris
July 2nd at 9 p.m. Grand Ballroom C. $15

Ms. Maya Angelou is hailed as one of the great voices of contemporary literature and as a remarkable Renaissance woman. Being a poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director, she continues to travel the world making appearances on college campuses, spreading her legendary wisodm. She has the unique ability to shatter the opaque preisms of race and class.

Louis Armstrong 4th of July Birthday Celebration with Ellis Marsalis Quintet and guest Nicholas Payton
July 4th. Auburn Ave. Free

Midnight Jams
June 28th – July 5th. 12 mid. SCS Hotel. $5

SPECIAL EVENTS

NBAF Opening Ceremony
June 28th, 7 p.m., King Chapel, Morehouse, Free

World Drummers for Peace
June 29th, 12 noon, Auburn Ave., Free

New York Pride

Sunday, June 30, 1996

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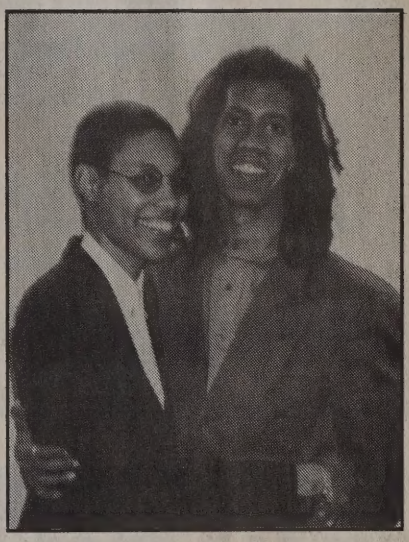
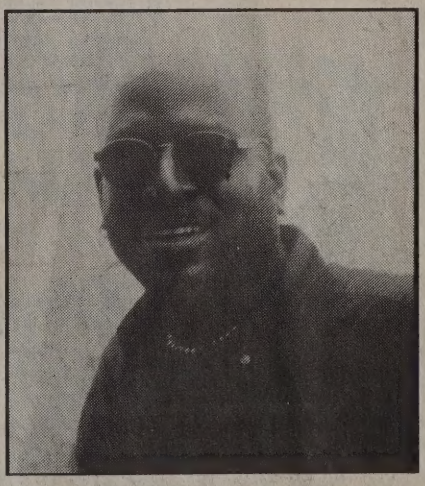


Lenora Rivers of NBGLLF and Troy Fernandes of AIDS Project Los Angeles.

Bernie Janesky (l) and Jerome Butts of Jonesboro on their wedding day at Piedmont Park.



L.A. photographer Ron Singleton.

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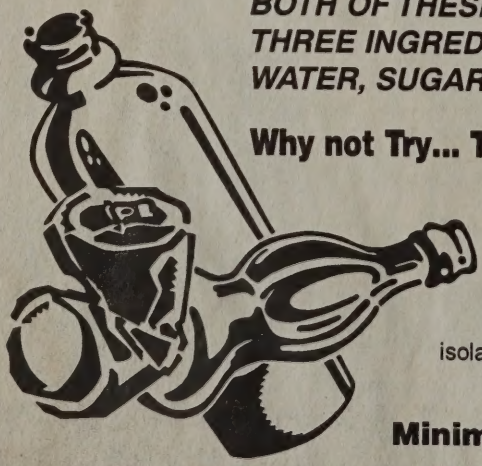

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	BBC AnniversaryDinner
Sunday	Full Truth Morning
Service	BBC Brunch
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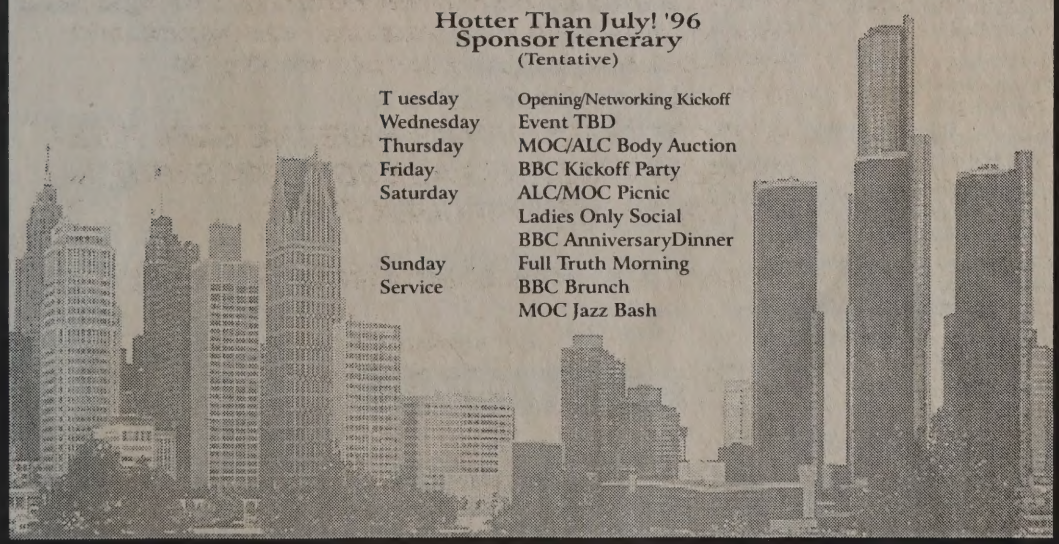

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Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

ATLANTA

AIDS SERVICES

AID Atlanta African-American Gay Outreach
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AIDS Education Services for Minorities,(AESM)
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AIDS Prevention Education for Asians and Pacific Islanders
770-936-0969 or em:KCSC1996@aol.com

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404-874-7926

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SisterLove, Inc.
404-753-7733

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The Adode Muse
404-521-2515

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In The Life Atlanta,(ITLA) Black lesbian and Gay Pride
404-872-6410

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teacher's Network
404-872-4320

Georgia Equality Project,(GEP)
404-662-4030

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
404-873-2002

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)
404-377-4258, em:info@gabc.gaypride.com

Human Rights Campaign,(HRC)
770-840-6969

Stonewall Bar Association
770-621-4663

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Lesbian and Gay Cancer Support
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Black Lesbians with Children,(BLWC)
404-378-4135 or 404-212-8515

Black and White Men Together
404-892-BWMT

Latinos En Accion
770-621-5743

Positive Black Lesbians United, (PBLU)
404-250-7950

Second Sunday Discussion Group
404-325-7321

TRIKONE Atlanta , Asian
404-892-0475, 404-373-8915
em:trikatl@mindspring.com

ZAMI, Afr.-Amer.lesbians
404-370-1392

YOUTH

Pride for Asian Youth,(PAY)
404-770-451-4389

Spelman College Lesbian Bisexual Alliance
404-752-7938

YouthPride
404-815-9965

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National Carolina Mobilization '96
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AYA Institute
201-451-3412

Bisexual Womyn of Color
212-479-7886

Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood (BLUeS)
212-330-9196

Las Buenas Amigas
212-868-78

Men of Color Against AIDS (MOCAA)
617-442-3800

Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE)
212-741-2247

South Asian Lesbian Gay Assoc. (SALGA)
212-294-2550; em salganyc@dorsai.org

Shades of Brown
212-439-1024

The Gay and Lesbian Center
208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011

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AIDS Services in Asian Communities
215-851-1938

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ORGANIZATIONS

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CHICAGO/DETROIT

A. Lorde Collective
313-862-3396

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays
312-871-2117

ONYX/Chicago, leather
1340 W. Irving Park RD Ste. 188 Chicago, IL 60613

Yahimba, lesbians
708-328-7715

Men of Color (MOC)
313-438-0704,x-1

The Ladies of a Current Affair
313-886-7180

Detroit Black Lesbian/Gay Pride
313-438-0704,x-1

Billionaires Boys Club
313-438-0704,x-1

KICK!, publication
313-438-0704,x-1

SOUTHWEST

Shades of Ebony Connections
214-570-5795

The Men's Gathering, Dallas
214-521-5342

WEST COAST

Bisexual Resource Line
415-703-7977

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum
213-964-7820, fx 213-964-7830

Black S.A.B.L.E., Inc.
213-860-8759

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)
510-649-0536

Cinnamon Productions
718-994-0028

Creation Woman
310-422-1970

Gay Black Female (GBF)
310-288-6315

International Black Writers & Artists
213-964-3721

Pyramid Productions
718-622-5093

Queer Gays & Lesbians United (Q-GLU)
718-639-4951

TRES, parties for lesbians
718-670-3643

United Lesbians of African Heritage (ULOAH)
213-960-5051

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project
310-216-3200

WEB SITES

NBGLLF
{http://www.qrd.org/qrd/orgs/BGLLF}

RUPAUL'S HOUSE OF LOVE
{http://www.cyberdyne.com/~tpreddle/rupaul}

BLACKLIST-Who's Who in Black Gay community
{http://www.udel.edu/nero/lists/blacklist.html}

BLK MAGAZINE
{http://www.blk.com/blk}

BLACK STRIPE
{http://www.qrd.org/qrd/www/culture/black}

ATLANTA GAY and LESBIAN VISITOR'S CENTER
www.atlgaylesvisit.w1.com

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JUNE 28-JULY 7, 1996
National Black Arts Festival. 404-730-7315

JUNE 28-30
Atlanta Pride Festival, Piedmont Park, PEOPLE OF COLOR FLOAT and march contingent info call 404-622-8069.

JUNE 29-30
NEW YORK Pride Festival
Tre's Tropical Groove Party
Sat. June 29, 10 pm-until at The Viper, 45th & 5th Ave. NYC $15

SUNDAY JUNE 30
Tre's 4th Annual Yacht Party 8pm-midnite, Queen of Hearts, $40 Pier 9 South Street Seaport NYC 718-670-3643 or ATL 770-671-1127

JULY 6,1996
AT THE BEACH , 8th Annual Beach Party, Point Dume, Malibu $5, After Party $15, hotline 213-969-1619

JULY 23-28
HOTTER THAN JULY, Detroit's Black Gay Pride, info line 1-888-529-KICK

AUG. 30-SEPT. 1
In The Life Atlanta Pride
404-872-6410

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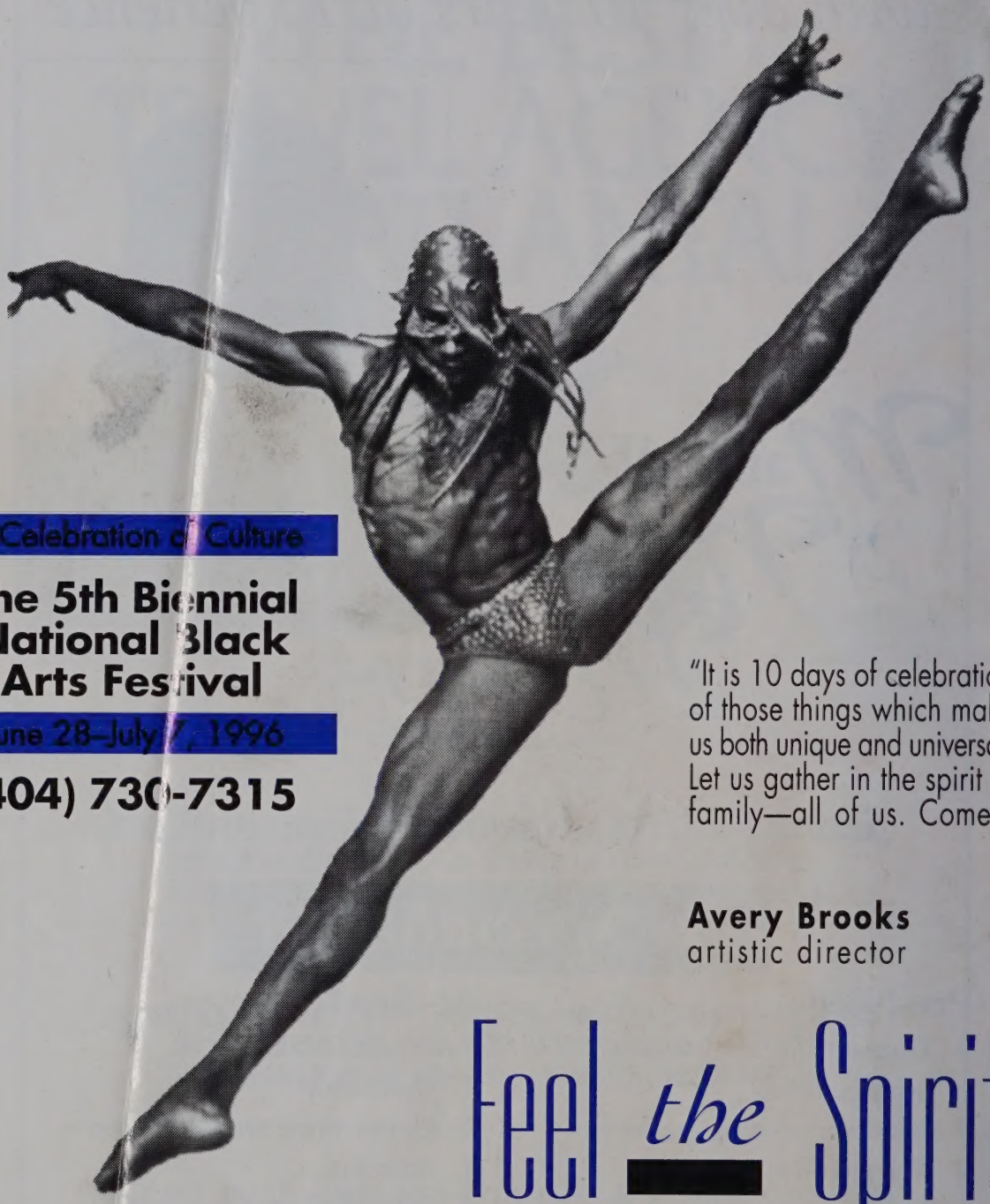

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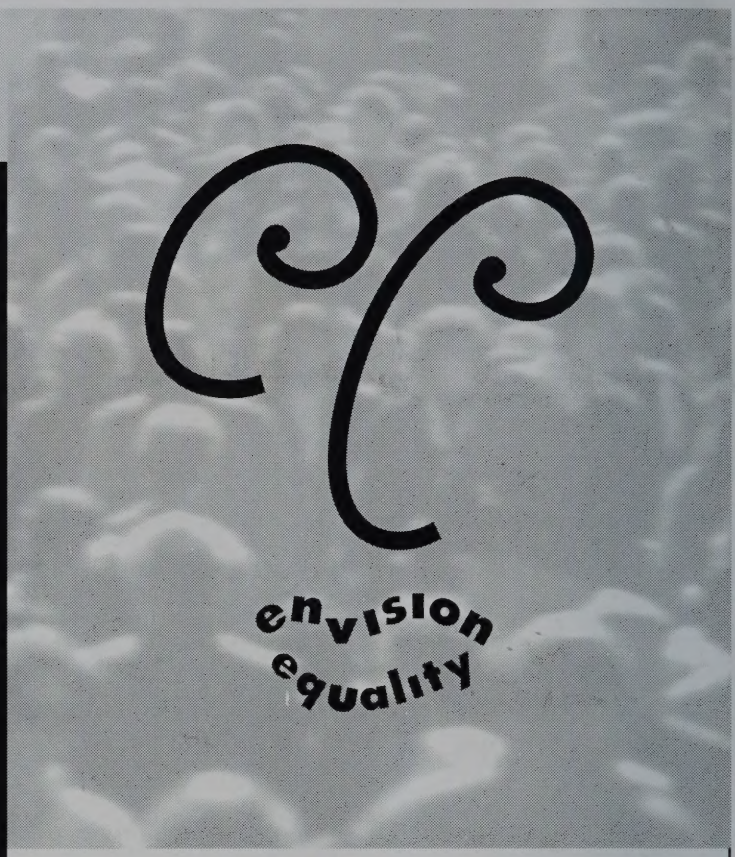
WHEN THE SILENCE IS exhumed!

96



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Saturday May 4, 1996

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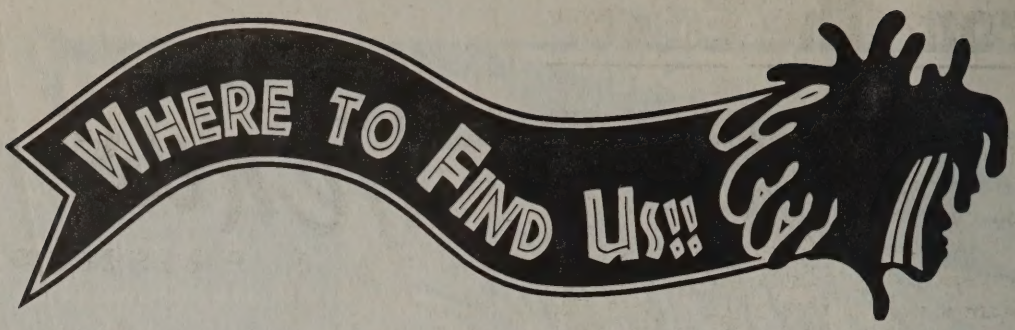

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Lambda Rising Bookstore

From The Editor

I had a conversation with a brother in L.A. who is working on a proposal to travel across the country documenting African-American gay and lesbian communities, and pride events, etc. Sounds exciting to me because, of course, I just knew that Atlanta was at the top of his list... WRONG! He was planning to bypass Atlanta and simply write us off as nothing but a "party town" sighting very little political consciousness among the masses of black gays in the South.

I couldn't hear any more! I had to stop brother in the middle of his pontification and just READ him! First of all, nowhere in the world are black gays and lesbians more conscious of the politics surrounding the issues of AIDS, housing discrimination, access to health care, black church homophobia and racism. Oh, trust me, we are conscious of these politics. Now, I will admit that it has been along time coming to somehow change our community's pinned up anger and frustration into a proactive movement, but the wheels are finally beginning to turn.

New black gay leadership has emerged in Atlanta. Young people who are compassionate about their work and not as concerned about the safety of white gays when speaking about the issues at hand.

It's a new day. Organizations like Second Sunday, a discussion group for black gay men recently held a well-attended political forum. There is new interest in re-establishing CAD, the Coalition of African Descent, a political umbrella for our community. In The Life, Inc., Atlanta's black gay and lesbian pride organization has done phenomenal work to ensure that Atlanta's black gay pride celebration is much more than just a "party." Several of Atlanta's black gay and lesbian leaders have come together to organize a fundraiser to help ensure the re-election of Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney because we recognize the need for direct access to policy makers.

By bypassing Atlanta, I think his documentary will be missing a great piece of black gay history, but that's O.K. because here in the South, we document ourselves.

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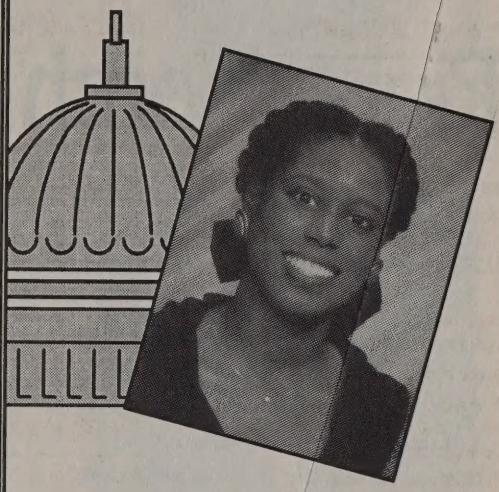

SUNDAY, APRIL 14

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616 Ormewood Ave • 622-8069

5 PM – 8 PM

Bar•B•Q Fundraiser

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FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

April 1996
Vol. 2., No. 4

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MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

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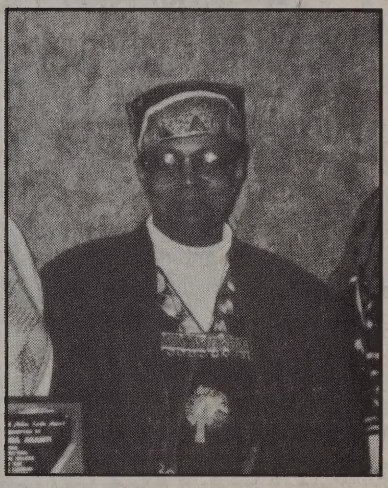
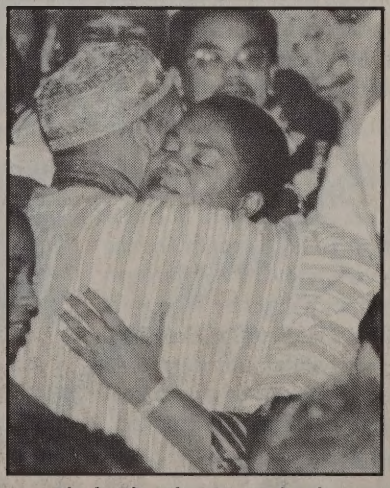
New York's Hottest Latin Ballroom!



Boston Breakfast Honors Bayard Rustin



Black Churches Unite for the Healing of AIDS.

WHEN the silence is EXHUMED

South Florida Mileposts & a Brief Background of People of Afrikan Descent In-the-Life

By Rice Blaque

The density of the silence surrounding our lives does not make it easy to gain this information."

—Essex Hemphill

"In-the-life" is a terminology historically used by those people of Afrikan descent who lead lives (not lifestyles) which other populations label gay, lesbian, bi, transgendered. Gathering historical information from and about South Floridans of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life is a challenge echoed throughout the Afrikan Diaspora

Buried by religious teachings and beliefs, ignored by cultural traditions, distorted by myths, suppressed by fears' realities and the general taboo that "black folks don't air their dirty linen," the silence is deafening.

As a rule, people of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life have not been highly visible in Gay Pride marches and parades, not very vocal in political forums (noting however a growing involvement in feminist politics by Women of Afrikan Descent In-The-Life), and not regular participants in the social landscape of the general lesbian and gay community.

This "invisible life" is not borne of apathy, separatism, or a lack of awareness. The mental, spiritual, emotional and physical survival of People of Afrikan Descent In-The Life has meant developing a suit of armor to combat the Black community's hetrosexism and the gay and lesbian community's racism.

Thus developed an "underground" network of professionals, athletes, teens, seniors, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, daughters, sons, grandparents or someone you know or think you know, who share their secret in a code of silence.

Silent to those outside of their circle which may never interact with other People of Afrikan Descent also In-The-Life. They are "passing" much as light-skinned people of color have "passed" for white before.

The overwhelming feeling of Afrikan Americans In-the-Life is that after surviving drugs, guns, AIDS, racism, criminal injustice they are abused as causalities of a system that neither understands nor cares. Rather than confront this situation, many avoid being consumed and/or paralyzed by it by going underground, yet remaining closeted destroys self-esteem and augments self-hatred.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

"Due to these intolerant attitudes some members of the black gay community have chosen to flee to the relative safety of the white gay community... even those brave enough to come out to families in turn are treated as if they have some dark, dirty secret to hide and are told not to embarrass the family." Nathan Kerr (Vol 1, No 4 "Knowledge is Life")

"Black American's view of the gay community is also white-washed. Thereby marginalizing an essential component of its own community. Rendering its sons (daughters), fathers and uncles as outcasts..." - Kerr

The silence will be exhumed, the celebration is near!

The essay "When the Silence Is Exhumed" was included in the Broward County Library's second annual recognition of Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

August 30 — 1996 — September 2

IN THE LIFE

ATLANTA

general meetings
every 3rd Sunday
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

In The Life Atlanta
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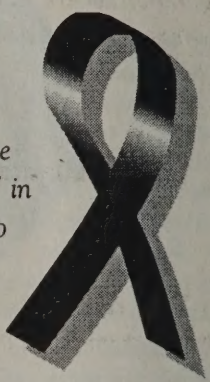
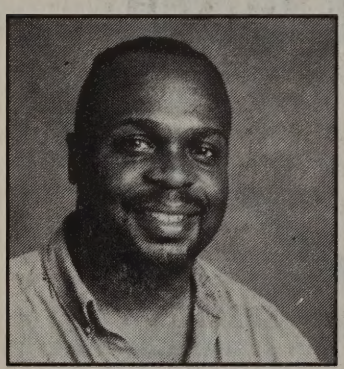
ACTION *in* JACKSON

The National Task Force for AIDS Prevention (NTFAP) together with an advisory board of black gay community leaders from eighth southern states will be holding a technical assistance and training conference devoted to alerting and sensitizing AIDS service providers to the needs of black gay, bisexual men. The conference will be held April 25-27 in Jackson, MS and is called the UJIMA institute. A day will also be devoted to training and empowerment for black gay and bisexual men. The conference is called the UJIMA Institute taken from the Swahili word for "collective work and responsibility."



The conference is an effort to address the prevention needs of African American gay and bisexual men. Recent reports have shown that infection rates for gay men of color in the southeast are the highest in the nation. This is indicative of the failure to reach this population with the resources and messages geared to ward effective prevention.

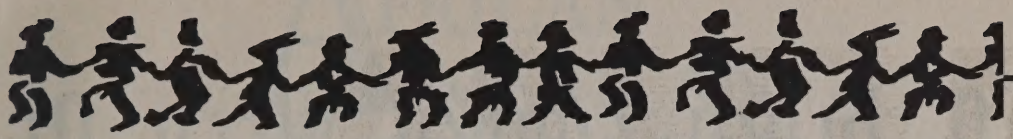


Author Badili Jones is outreach coordinator for black gay men at AID Atlanta.

- Address the service gaps between service providers and the black gay population in the South.
- Sensitize health providers to the needs and concerns of black gay men.
- Present culturally appropriate HIV prevention strategies for homosexually active men of African descent.
- Link health care providers to black gay men in their communities.
- Empower black gay men to learn to advocate for themselves, to network with other gay men from the southeast, and to foster productive discussions around developing positive self-concepts regarding issues of race and sexuality.

Black gay, bisexual, and transgendered men, and services providers and representatives from AIDS service organizations, community groups are encouraged to attend. Also anyone providing or intending to provide outreach and HIV prevention services to black gay men should attend.

For more information please contact the NTFAP's Raymond E. Dumas, Sr. at 415-356-8131 or call Badili Jones at 404-885-6800 x271.



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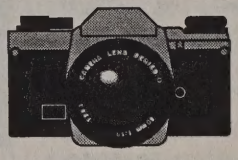

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A Black Church Week Of Prayer

Craig Washington

The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS blessed Atlanta with seven days of prayer, education and fellowship. From Sunday through Saturday March 3–9, seven churches/chapels hosted HIV-focused programs providing spiritual sustenance and practical information. Pastors, congregants, service providers, and friends infected and affected convened all over the city to spread healing balm throughout the black community.

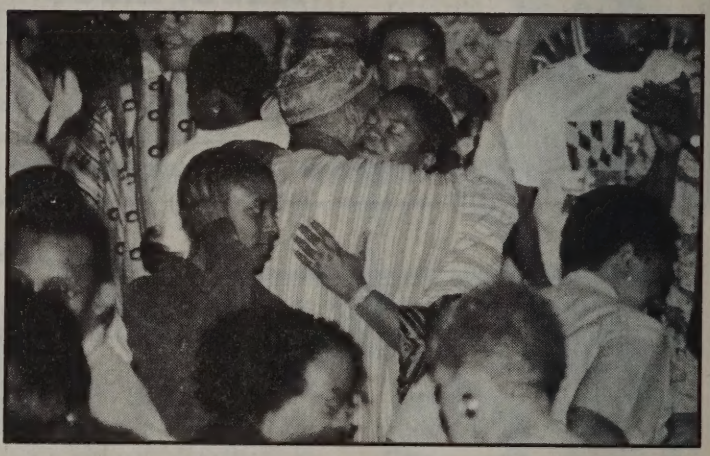

PHOTO: BY RON SINGLETON

This event is actually based upon the original Harlem Week of Prayer established in 1987 by Ms. Pernessa Seal, founder of Balm in Gilead (a technical support agency for churches providing HIV/AIDS services). The CDC (Center for Diseases Control) funded training for the Week's planning committee to implement the programs. This Week was designed to equip the faith community with the means to address the needs of its people.

Healing commenced on Sunday, of course, with the Opening Worship Service at One Accord Community Church of God in Christ (C.O.G.I.C.) in Decatur. With Dr. T.A. Body presiding, the church rocked with a serious praise and worship ministry. Pastor Body's sermon indicted the black Church for failing to welcome all members of the communal family. He mixed humor with passion to illustrate the hypocrisy of church-going Christians and blessed the Week of Prayer as God's commission to the Church. Monday's program held at the Interdenominational Theological Center Chapel in the West End, featured a progressive seminar-fashioned service to educate the pastors. "Homosexuality, AIDS and the Church" and "Can the Church Save Our Children" were among the topics covered.

Panelists from local AIDS ministries discussed the joys and challenges of such service. Volunteerism was the theme for Tuesday's service held at the "gay-friendly" Hillside Chapel and Truth Center in the Cascade area. Highlights included a processional by Clark Atlanta University students, speaker Dorothy Triplett, formerly of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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AID Atlanta

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"WE PUT THE CARE IN APOTHECARY!"

In Rio Mall
595 Piedmont Ave.,
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-875-9717 fax: 875-1754

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUZETTE CONTRERAS

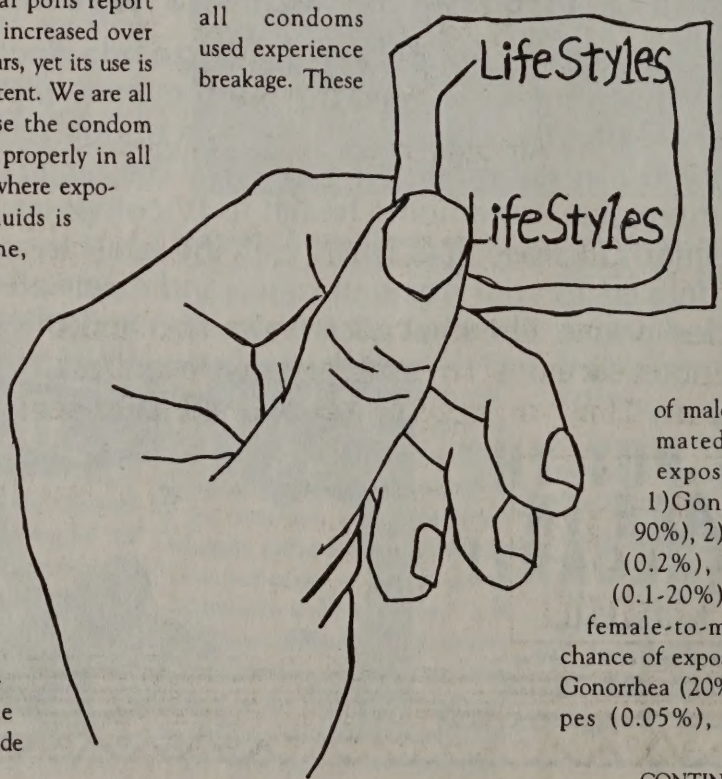
Latex LOVE!

WHAT THE CONDOM CAN AND CAN NOT DO FOR YOU

Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D.

Safer sex with the use of a condom without a true understanding of what motivates the act of sex itself is an on-going issue. Specifically, causal sex with the use of the condom is common. Studies are also showing that serial monogamy has increased as well. Overall, national polls report condom use has increased over the past three years, yet its use is not always consistent. We are all challenged to use the condom consistently and properly in all sexual practices where exposure to bodily fluids is possible. No one, regardless of how educated, experienced or healthy you or a potential partner may be, can know enough about safer sex. Condoms are not enough anymore to make anyone feel risk-free. What the condom can provide you is a reduced risk of exposure to sperm and microbes that spread sexually transmitted diseases. If condoms are used consistently and properly your risk is reduced significantly.

It is important to note that national random studies reveal that 2-to-5% of all condoms used experience breakage. These percentages increase with multiple partners and participation in anal sex. Most national data are only limited to heterosexual reporting. According to K.M. Stone in an article entitled, "HIV, STDs and Other Barriers", if condoms are not used consistently and correctly the estimated chance that microbes will be transmitted from one infected partner to another during a single act of intercourse can vary. Examples of male-to-female estimated chance of exposure include: 1)Gonorrhea (50-90%), 2) Genital Herpes (0.2%), and 3) AIDS (0.1-20%). Examples of female-to-male estimated chance of exposure include: 1) Gonorrhea (20%), Genital herpes (0.05%), and 3) AIDS



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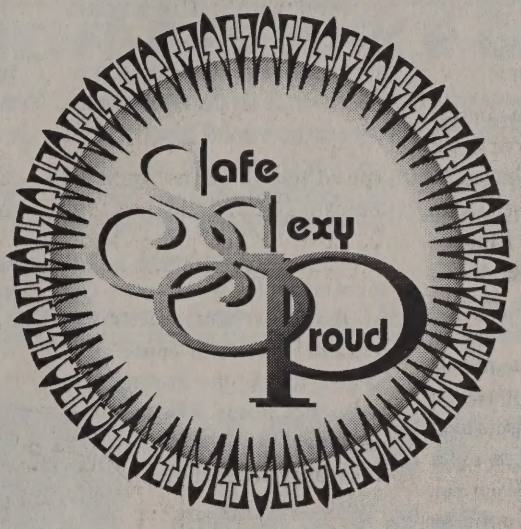
This Is How We Do It . . .

Safely



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Latex Love

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

(0.01-to-10%). Despite figures not being available for male-to-male or female-to-female, it is very important to note that HIV transmission is on the increase again in the gay community. We all should be thankful that the condom serves as a barrier against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Despite its ability to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, no one can use the condom as an excuse for making sex safer emotionally.

There is nothing worse than having what may appear to be an intimate experience with someone, only to learn that it served as another attempt to field an empty void in your life. More often than not, this is an on-going scenario in the lives of many people. Perhaps you have shared conversations with friends who comment on a desire for true intimacy that goes beyond sex. What makes it difficult for individuals to go beyond the physical experience and step into true intimacy? There are multiple postulates that can help explain this on-going phenomenon. Serial episodes of temporary romantic "highs" have replaced a desire to experience true intimacy for many regardless of sexuality. It appears that maintaining a relationship is simply too much work, provoking a pessimistic outlook on longevity. In our community, we have defined our relationships to be successful if they last for six months, nine months and a tremendous success should they survive past one year.

Should you take a poll among your closest friends, you will not learn anything new. Most are single; and desiring some form of intimacy—physical, emotional, intellectual and or spiritual.

Now, you or your friends may have decided that until Mr. or Ms. Right comes along, occasional physical intimacy is expected. Let's be real and acknowledge that the desire to have sex will not diminish. This is particularly evident given recent increased rates of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. However, what is more apparent is that we do not hold each other accountable for making a conscious effort to figure out where we are in life. That is, what really motivates us to accept having occasional sexual encounters, with or without the use of a condom. It appears that momentarily, we dismiss the presence of HIV. This has afforded individuals opportunity to give reasons for this inability to practice power over their lives consistently. These reasons can be linked to one familiar word—FEAR.

It is fear of dealing with who we really are that promotes continuous self-defeating habits that have become so very difficult for many to break. Fear of reconciling our past with mother, father, ex-lovers, current life-experiences makes it easy to dismiss the magnitude of our emptiness. Silent about our fears give them greater power over our lives. Additionally, the inability to do something consistently about our acknowledged fears can be equally debilitating. Consequently, we take on opportunities to project "togetherness", seek others that do the same, and use whatever form of escape necessary to anesthetize our inner most pain. We must become aware of what is presented to us, even from members within our own community that foster an inability to be real with ourselves.

We are consistently presented with images of what being gay should be like—young, hung, hot, muscular, etc—and thus we are presented with superficial images that exploit for profit our sex drives, our low self-esteem, and inability to become unstuck. At some point, many of us will pay the price for avoiding taking the time to take care of ourselves. The price is getting greater for a number of reasons. Many of us are finding that it is important to make self-discovery a life-long project given negative receptivity we may have received from family and friends regarding our sexuality. It is increasingly important that we do not allow our sexuality, that which we want others to accept as be "okay" to became the vehicle through which we seek to temporarily fill that empty feeling. Too many of us have been in denial far too long, whether about practicing unsafe sex or how we participate in safer sex to fill a void in our lives.

In fact, no one can continue to think that having sporadic episodes of sex with a condom is risk free; either physical, emotionally or spiritually. Now is the time to examine your motivations for intimacy. Michelangelo Sinorile, a contributing writer for OUT Magazine wrote, "Intimacy does not mean taking crystal meth and heading to a sex club [or one night stand] to become someone's repository as a way to fill that empty feeling you may have inside. It means treating intimacy like anything you value, using it responsibly and wisely."

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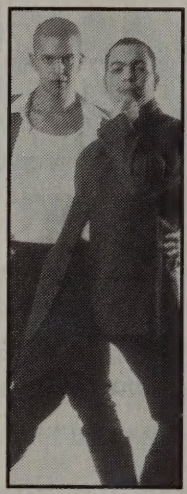
The House of Infiniti!

Torrence Allen

For the past two years the House of Infiniti has been creating havoc on the runway of the New York City ballroom scene.

This fierce group of young Latinos has been dominating such categories as butch face, team runway, butch queen in drag runway, bazaar and runway models effect.

One of the rising stars on the scene is your coverman Rudy Infiniti. Rudy, an aspiring model, moved to New York in 1990 to pursue his career. While waiting for his big break and working odd jobs, Rudy would compete at vogueing balls to hone his skills. He joined the House of Infiniti in 1991. Today he is still one of the house's top members with a number of first place trophies to prove it.



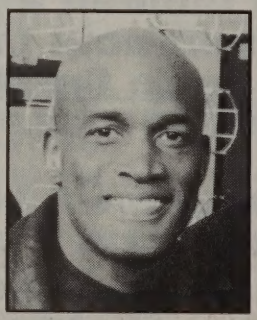
Last fall Rudy and eight of his brothers and sisters participated in the House of Latex Peer Mobilization Intervention: a project aimed at educating young people who participate in the ballroom scene about HIV/AIDS. As a peer educator, Rudy is a model for young people in his community around safer sex and HIV information.

The Latin Ballroom scene, although originated in New York City, has already become a hit among Atlanta's young urban culture.

For more information, contact the House of Latex Project in New York City; c/o GMHC, 129 West 20th Street, NY, NY 10011 or call 212-807-7517.

The Amen Corner

In a powerful production brimming with music, laughter, and spiritual fervor, Artistic Director Kenny Leon will direct Carol Mitchell-Leon, Crystal Fox, and Taurean Blaque in James Baldwin's The Amen Corner, April 3–May 5. One of the country's foremost literary talents and author of "Go Tell it on the Mountain" and "Giovanni's Room," Baldwin wrote The Amen Corner in 1953. Echoing with the sounds of spirituals and jazz, The Amen Corner will feature singers Chandra Currelley, Shelia Ranae Stroud and Bernardine Mitchell.



The Alliance Theatre Company's Kenny Leon

The Amen Corner tells the story of Sister Margaret, a pious storefront preacher of 1950's Harlem, and her son David, the church pianist who is being increasingly drawn to the temptations of "downtown" music. Faced with the fear of losing her son and her church, she confronts the illusions of her piety and the many lies of her life, and in a moment of epiphany, Sister Margaret discovers that the true work of the Lord is in loving all of His children.

Baldwin said he drew on his own experience to "recreate the moments I remember as a boy preacher, to involve the people, to shake them up, and, hopefully, to change them."

For Leon, Baldwin's play is the dramatic tale of people struggling to balance their spiritual needs with their desire to live happily fulfilled, rather than to simply survive. "With a musical tension that parallels the dramatic moments," says Leon, "the Alliance Theatre will be filled with a spirit and magic that will leave audiences feeling uplifted and excited about being alive."

A G M C 15

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for the World Premiere of

Memento Mori: An AIDS Requiem

by James Adler

Saturday & Sunday, April 13th & 14th, 8 pm

The work consists of nine movements using traditional Latin, Hebrew and English texts, personal prose by and about children and adults with AIDS, with selections of Poetry from Quentin Crisp.

In addition to AGMC's over one hundred voices, a full orchestra and guest soloists will perform in Glenn Memorial Auditorium on the Campus of Emory University.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit Project Open Hand and Jerusalem House.

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The Week of Prayer

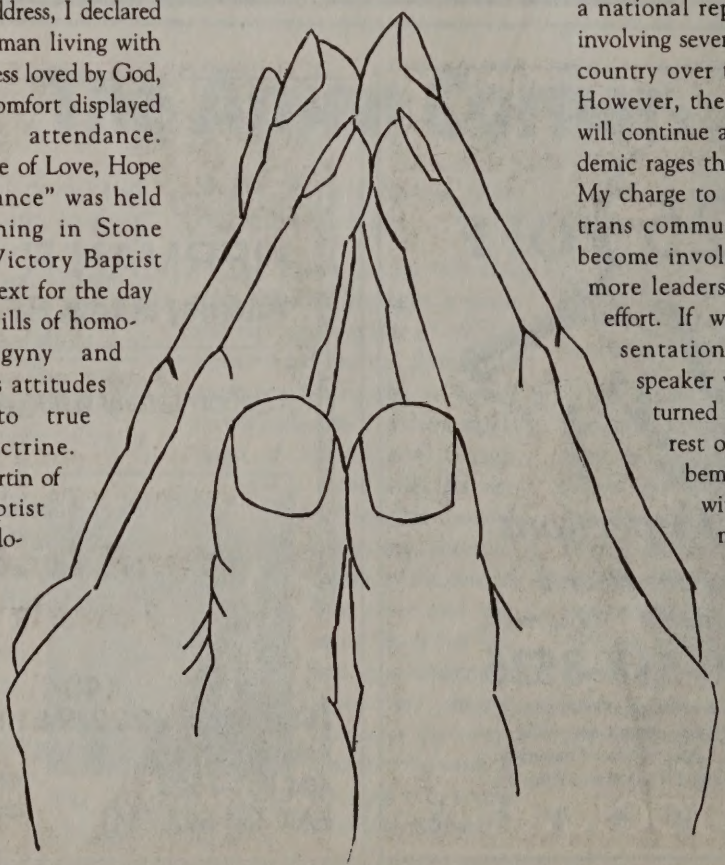
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

CDC, and presentations by local volunteer coordinators from AID Atlanta, A.E.S.M. and Sisterlove. On Wednesday morning, Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church hosted "Positively Living With HIV/AIDS" which provided information pertinent to PWAs such as nutrition tips, drug trial data, women's resources, legal rights, etc. Sevenanda, the Little 5-Points healthfood oasis, had a booth displaying organically grown fruits, beverages and literature. The evening service at Wesley featured a foot-stompin' praise and worship by Prophet Michael Dowdell and a special dance ministry performed by preteens.

During my address, I declared myself as a gay man living with HIV who is no less loved by God, despite the discomfort displayed by some in attendance. "Worship Service of Love, Hope and Remembrance" was held Thursday evening in Stone Mountain at Victory Baptist Church. The text for the day confronted the ills of homophobia, misogyny and AIDSphobia as attitudes antithetical to true Christian doctrine. Pastor Kathi Martin of Emmanuel Baptist Church led an eloquent prayer of remembrance for loved ones who've made their transition. Ironically, Victory Baptist allegedly declined an openly gay man's offer to address the congregation, in favor of an infected woman. Was it plain ole homophobia or excessive caution? Is there a difference?

"Taking Charge of Our Minds, Bodies and Future" focused on reaching our youth and was hosted by Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur. Youth outreach workers engaged the audience in role play exercises demonstrating adults' inability to discuss sexuality openly with their young.

The last day of this momentous Week began early Saturday morning (7 AM!) at the Piedmont Park gazebo. A handful of stalwarts braved the chill-to-the-bone weather to sing and pray for the victory of this "movement." Minister Marvin Quick administered a stirring call for unity among the Week of Prayer planners. Mid-morning service was conducted at Believe & Receive Christian Sabbath Fellowship, home base for Pastor Julia Robinson, Chairperson for the Week of Prayer Planning Committee. Song and dance ministry were offered and Ms. Pernessa Seal herself made a surprise appearance. We returned to Wesley Chapel for the Closing Service.



Proclamations from President Clinton, Mayor Bill Campbell, and Decatur Mayor Elizabeth Wilson were read aloud. Minister Marvin Moss delivered a poignant message recalling the loss of his brother due to AIDS. As Pastor Robinson put it, "This is not the end, this is only the beginning."

The Week of Prayer is part of a national replication project involving several sites across the country over the next 3 years. However, the Week of Prayer will continue as long as the epidemic rages through our village. My charge to the black/gay/les/trans community is that we become involved and take on more leadership roles in this effort. If we had more representation, no openly gay speaker would have been turned away. Let us not rest on our laurels and bemoan the situation without action. We must reclaim God's love as our own as well as remembering that the Creator loves us just us as we are!

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Wendy O'Neil

Age:. 22

Status:. . . . . Involved

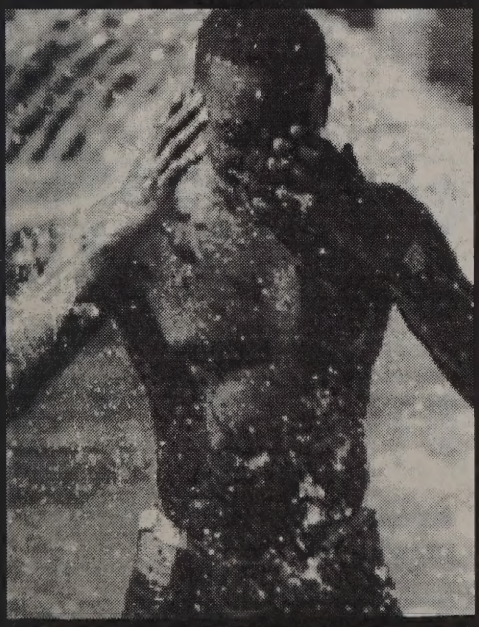
Career: . . . . . Student of Fine Arts, Spelman College

Hometown:. . New Orleans

Latest Book:. "The Good Negress," by A.J. Vardelle

Former co-chair and one of several founding members of Spelman College's Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance, last summer Wendy participated in the NGLTF First Youth Leadership Training Institute. As a result of her participation, she was featured in a segment of In The Life T.V. Her current project is a monthly story circle because "I need to hear us tell our stories and celebrate myself with my sisters." She graduates in December of '96.

RON SINGLETON
213.937.6538



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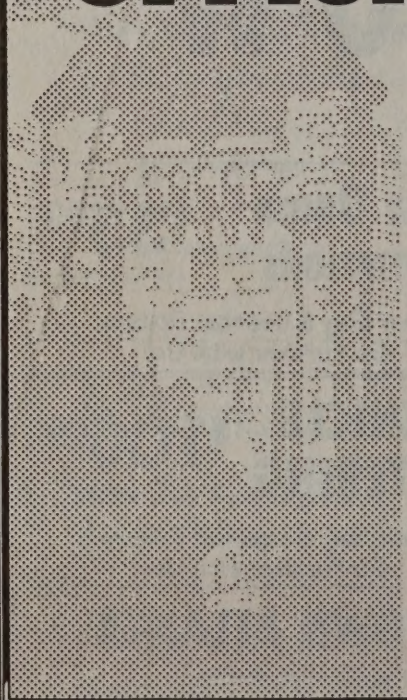

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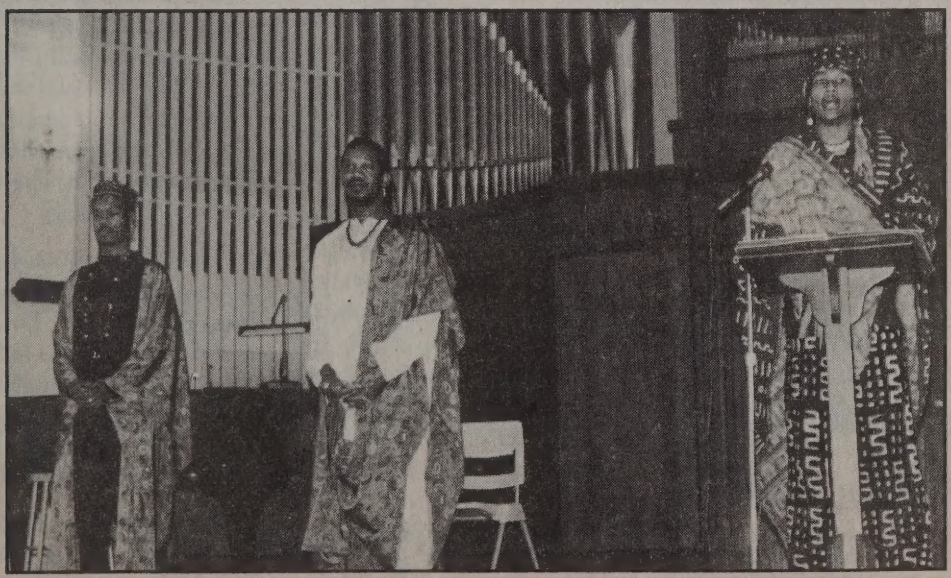
The Atlanta Lambda Center's Black Gay & Lesbian History Celebration at Sister's Chapel, Spelman College

Top (l to r): Pat Hussain, Caron Williams, Tony Daniels, Elias Farajaje-Jones, Aelista Bristow, Joan Garner, Charlene Cothran, Traci Fields. Kneeling (l to r): Mandy Carter, Queen, Mary Ann Adams, Sonya Hemphill.



Tony Daniels leads Adodi Muse in a theatrical performance.

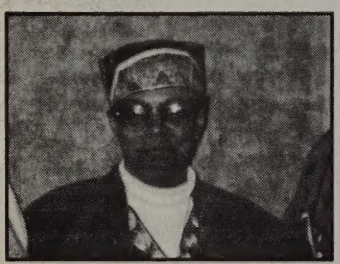
Seventh Annual Bayard Rustin Breakfast

Candace Boyce, Bartholomew T. Casimir, and Pam Scott will be Keynote Speakers

The AIDS Action Committee and the Bayard Rustin Breakfast Committee will host the 7th Annual Bayard Rustin Breakfast, "Reclaiming The Vision of Our Forebears, Continuing The Spiritual Journey," Saturday, April 20, 1996, in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

The Bayard Rustin Breakfast Committee's goal is to keep in the tradition of the previous breakfast speakers like the late literary greats Marlon Riggs and Steven Corbin, and the dancer extraordinaire, Bill T. Jones.

Candace Boyce, is a New York City community activist and founder of African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change (formerly Salsa Soul).



Candace Boyce, founder of African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change.

Recently, Boyce received the Mable Hampton Award from the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum for her outstanding contributions to the lesbian community.

Bartholomew T. Casimir is the Program Director for the Indiana State Department of Health and is the current chair of the National Association of People with AIDS and has been living with HIV since 1993.

Pam Scott is the third speaker and will give the community perspective about HIV/AIDS. Pam is a certified AIDS Educator conducting public speaking for Cambridge Cares About AIDS, and the American Red Cross. Pam is also HIV+.

This year's highlights includes the 1st Bayard Rustin Award for Courage given to an individual who exemplifies the principles of the late great civil rights leader.Imtiyax Hussein is this year's recipient. Mr. Hussein is the founder of Massachusetts Area Asian Lambda Association (MASALA), and the Coordinator of Housing Advocacy at Positive Directions, Boston.

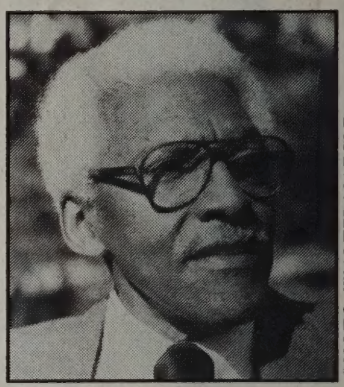


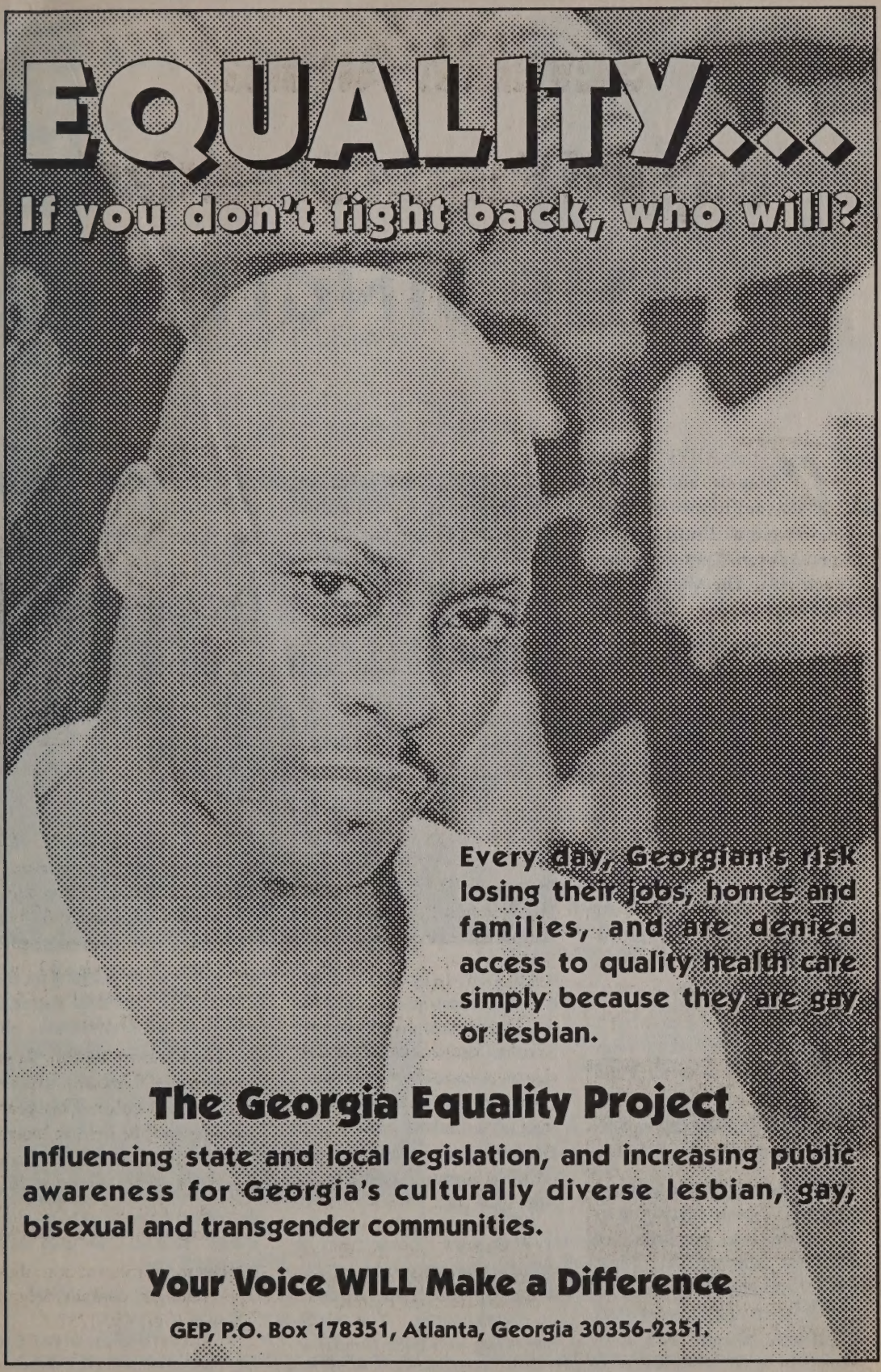
PHOTO: WALTER NAEGLE

Civil Rights and Gay Activist Bayard Rustin.

The chairpeople of this 1996 event are Mia Anderson, Artistic Director of the local Drag Kings, Sluts and Goddesses, and Philip Robinson, poet, anthologized in The Road Before Us 100 Black Gay Poets and In The Life, A Black Gay Anthology.

The breakfast annually brings more than 400 lesbians, gays and bisexuals of color. This year's breakfast will be held at Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries Reception Hall, located at 1010 Harrison Avenue in Roxbury, MA from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM.

For more information about the breakfast, contact Belynda Dunn at (617) 450-1287.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Livin' THE SINGLE LIFE

by Steven G. Fullwood

Sistagirls, brothermen, do you fear being alone? Tremble at the thought of being single? Are you in an abusive or difficult relationship? Listen up:

Sit your butt down. Keep it simple.

These words came from Tibet's Honorable Dalai Lama to Iyanla Vanzant. Vanzant, author of the best-selling Acts of Faith, daily meditations for African American folk, shared this and other thoughts while giving the luncheon keynote at a recent women's conference in Washington, D.C. Okay, so the Dalai didn't say "sit your butt down," I added that part.

I've taken a look at what I consider to be the "relationship myth" in America—its form and function, and why so many of us cannot envision ourselves as both single and happy.

The myth, as I see it, takes no prisoners. Nearly everything in our culture places couplings over singleness, marriages over single women and men, two over one. On television talk shows abound with people obsessed with how-to-get-where-to-go-how-to-walk-talk-steal-cheat-lie-crawl-beg for that special someone. Magazines boast ten simple ways to get that special someone to fall in love with you. Radios broadcast soft sensual sounds, some honey-laden voice sister testifies, "I have nothing, nothing, nothing if I don't have you."

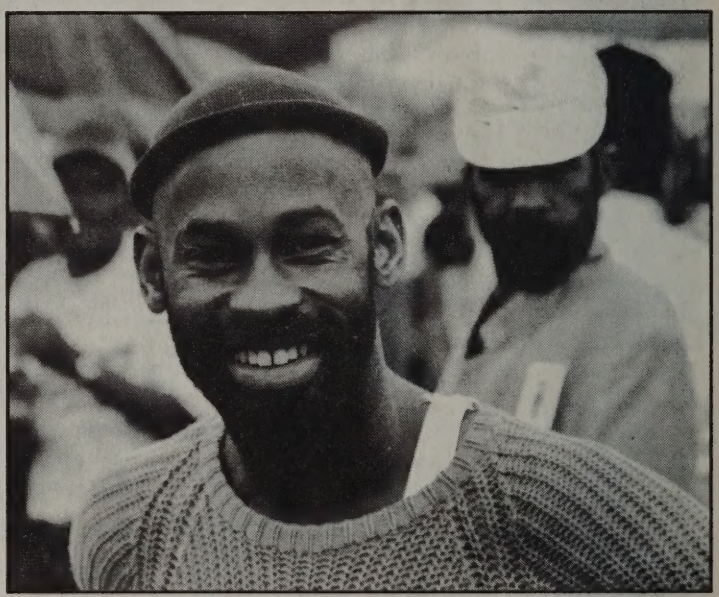

PHOTO: RON SINGLETON PHOTOGRAPHY

Well, now. These types of cultural products can be terribly distracting while you're trying to do the shopping.. You might hum along with Billie Holiday at the market while reaching for the Raisin Bran. You stop, slap your head and wonder, where, oh, where can your loverman or loverwoman be. That's when it hits you. You don't have anyone.

And that's okay. Most of us fail to recognize one simple sobering fact about our lives: we do indeed have someone—ourselves. That is, if we truly want ourselves.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Andréas Goree

Age:..... 28

Status:..... Single

Career:..... Telecommunications Manager

Hometown:.. St. Louis, MO

Latest Book:. "And This Too Shall Pass," by E. Lynn Harris

As a member of the advisory board of In The Life, Inc. (Atlanta's Black Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee), Andréas is busy helping to build the structure of the organization. He dedicates his work to the surviving partners and families of those who have lost loved ones to HIV/AIDS.

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If you are a black gay man, community leader or health service provider, attend this critically important conference.

$25 registration fee for black gay men; $50 for others.

For more information, contact Raymond E. Dumas, Sr., National Community Organizer, San Francisco, 415/356-8136.

Sponsored by the

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Living the Single Life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

Understand what you're up against. One would be pressed to find expressions of self-love in this society not linked to an eventual coupling or a new pair of Reebok. The message is: Love yourself to make yourself suitable for someone else. Unconditional self-love is a hard attribute to find in someone these days. Most folk can't see self-love as a perpetual liberating state of being. After all, if you loved yourself unconditionally, who'd need designer clothing or Maybelline? Surely these products, and other such products' value would be profoundly different; maybe they'd cease to exist.

But let's go slow. Don't want no brains to explode.

While it may hold that you are a product of a coupling (immaculate conceptions aside) you can live a healthy life as a single person. Really, I swear. You just have to get used to the fact that what will come to you, will come. In the time being, you should be having the time of your life. Life is good, I tell you. You can learn alot about yourself when your alone. Be thankful you're not in a debilitating or an abusive relationship. You can do whatever you choose.

Reflect, sisters and brothers, reflect. It may be difficult to go to that space alone initially, but it's the only way to mature. After awhile, you can participate more fully in loving someone, because you've placed love for yourself first. Surround yourself with friends who challenge you to be all that you can be and more. Now and then, you can luxuriate in a union, be in a coupling that doesn't corrode your sense of being, or compromise who you are. You'll quickly realize being in a couple isn't a prerequisite for being human, being happy or healthy. No man or woman can rescue you, because, well, you're doing just fine.

A burst of light.

You might say, well, what about single bars, single functions and the like, but y'all know the aim: a coupling. Hers and hers, his and his and his and hers towels.

The way this culture shoves the relationship myth down our throats is terribly disenabling for your average Joe or Joanne. If you're single, the implication is "you're available: ever waiting with chocolates and flowers, in your best shirt of dress. You're never at your best, you know, because even the hint of a potential suitor makes our body quake with yearning. Got your mouth all tasted up for some good, good loving. You ooze desperation.

Face it, you're hideous. You prop yourself up, all doused in perfume or aftershave lotion, only to be picked up or over, most likely by some moron, that you, in your right mind, wouldn't go near unless there's a gun poking you in the back.

I speak from experience, from nights on the prowl for unyielding, soft brown flesh; fantasies, if you will, never to appear at all, only to exist in my busy little head. Which is, in all practicality, where most fantasies should reside. But that's fodder for another column, so I'll stop there.

Anyway, I was left with getting acquainted with myself, which to my surprise, was quite all right. Difficult at first, but tremendously satisfying in a way no one else could satisfy me. While going through this process, I thought to myself, Am I worthless if no one tells me otherwise? The answer knocked me out. Nothing knocks you out like the truth; or rather, a perceived truth. Surely, this can't be it, I thought, the end, that's all folks. It was then I began to investigate ways I could affirm myself, be good to myself in ways I hadn't previously considered. In a relatively short time, my health improved, my spiritual life flourished and my career blossomed. Child, I looked at my feet and they were new.

Now don't get me wrong. I've got nothing against a good dicking and all, but when it comes at the expense of my self-esteem, alarms go off, I come to my senses and come correct. I change my behavior and the offensive party is given the boot. Being in a relationship should free you up, not chain you down. If you give love, there's no reason not to expect it returned tenfold. If your love isn't returned, move on, baby. When you love yourself, you're never on your last, never feeling worthless or insignificant. You'll demand the best for and from yourself. It's what you deserve, remember that.

Being single is not the period in between your relationships; its quite the opposite. You're the only one who can see to it that your needs are met. And to do it properly, you'll have to give some serious thought to what those needs are, alone, being still.

Face it, you'll always have yourself.

And that's all right, you know?

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

"In Flight"

In Flight Women's Amateur Athletic Union Basketball Team is one of the newest teams in the country on the semi-pro level and based in Washington, D.C.

In Flight has now expanded to a nationally ranked team since placing runner-up in the 1995 National Amateur Athletic Union Championship held at Catholic University, Washington D.C. Women's teams from all over the country participate in this tournament each year.

The primary purpose of the team's existence is to promote women's basketball, to provide women with a forum to exhibit their talents and take them to a women's professional league to begin on the East Coast.

In Flight is a memorial team dedicated to a woman who coached Baltimore inner-city women. Myra Harrision, better known as "Fuzzy," now deceased, guided women in organized sports. She stood for discipline and leadership.

The team will participate in the AAU National, April 19–21 at Catholic University, the HoopHeads/Queen Latifah Pro Classic April 26–28 at Howard University, and HoopHeads again in Los Angeles July 6th weekend.

Queen Latifah (center), sponsor of HoopHeads Women's Basketball Pro Classic, congratulates her team after a game.

In conjunction with Sophisticated Ladies Productions, In Flight will be holding a series of fundraisers for new team uniforms, travel expenses and various other needs. The first event will be held at Circle Bar on April 20 in Washington, D.C. from 10 PM–3 AM and feature D.J. India.

The second fundraiser is a very special event honoring Queen Latifah, her team, and HoopHeads for their hard work and dedication to the support of women's basketball over the years. This event is an exclusive VIP party; you must be 25 years-old to attend. It will be held April 26 at the Foxtrappe, located at 700 Water St., S.W. in Washington, D.C. For an invitation, contact Ms. Vicki of Sophisticated Ladies at (301) 231-4028. The third fundraising event will be held Saturday evening after the Pro Classic on April 27 from 10 PM–3 AM at Jenny's Show Lounge located in Waterside Mall on M Street. S.W. Five levels of secured underground parking are available for your safety.

Plans are now underway for an Olympic event in Atlanta that will benefit African American AIDS organizations. The one night gala will attract more than 300 athletes and their partners. The event is by invitation only. Tickets are $100. Corporate sponsors are lining up including Venus Magazine and one of the nation's largest beer brewers. For additional information, contact Venus at (404) 622-8069.

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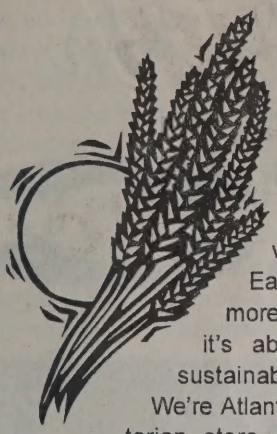

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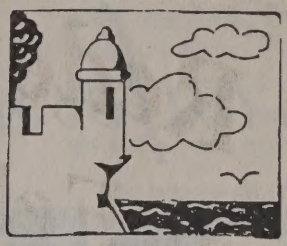

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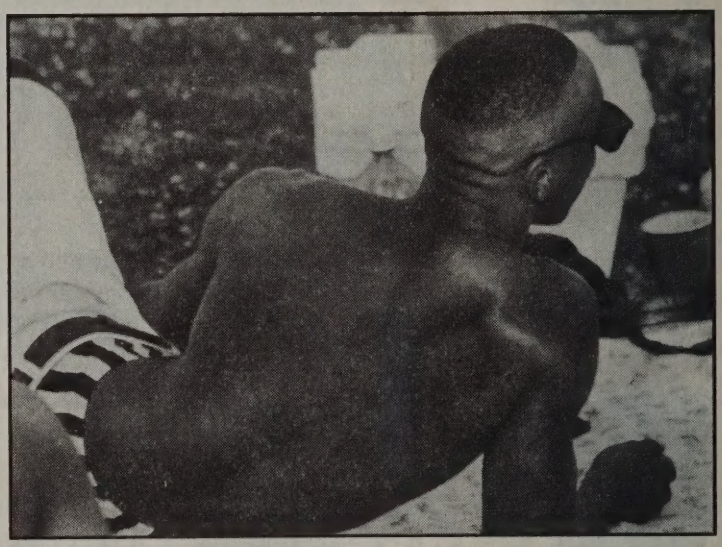
Confessions Of An OREO

For many weeks I have been in a constant state of awareness that I am an oreo, an uncomfortable situation in which to find oneself.

I was labeled this by a friend after revealing to him my opinion on the O.J. Simpson verdict. I will spare you my opinion; but, the fact that, because of it, I was labeled an oreo should be evidence as to what it is.

This was not the first time I had been labeled as such, placed into that category of African-Americans who are in some obscure way...white-like. Having been called bougie, uppity, sidity, I was not overly shocked by my friends statement. I was however troubled, because I was once again reminded of the way in which we as African-American gay and lesbian people, place ourselves into limiting, unfortunate categories.

I did not take my friend's comment to heart—not too much. I only saw it as an example of the lingering divisions in the African-American comm. I was, however, deeply concerned that being called an oreo, like so many other labels, would only reinforce my disgust with labels



and their place in African-American community.

I asked other friends, gay and straight—all , "Would you consider me an oreo?" All of them replied, "No," and wondered why I was giving this fleeting comment so much attention. One acquaintance with a biting sense of humor, replied, "James, I have always just considered you a strong Black ...woman." This gave me something else to think about, but I still wasn't satisfied. An oreo...me?

I was bothered that one of my gay brothers would see me in this light, and more disturbed by the fact that I was actually taking time out of my life to even think about the whole matter.

Deciding that the answer was somewhere hidden in my short history on the blue planet, I thought...I grew up in a family, like most others—dysfunctional. My mother was a teacher; my father was trained as an engineer and spent a great deal of his life battling substance abuse. We were middle class. We lived in a small town in East Tennessee. We talked slow, traveled often. I lived the quintessential, suburban, Southern experience. But,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

this could describe any number of people.

I began to assess my lifestyle. I do not party...much. I enjoy reading and painting. I speak little, like jazz. I went to college—not an historically Black institution of higher learning, but one, gasp, that during the Civil War, served as a hospital for Confederate soldiers. But don' tell anybody. I cannot convincingly say "w'zup" and I try my best to use who and whom in the correct manner. I am not stylish—because I can't afford to be. I am not a Republican. But this is neither here nor there Black or white.

With "OREO... OREO... OREO...," pulsing at the back of my mind, I even began to monitor my actions. Should I really order this cranberry sweater from J. Crew? I hope no one saw me buying that Cecilia Bartoli CD. Should I really disclose that I enjoyed Darieck Scott's Traitor to the Race better than James Earl Hardy's B-Boy Blues? If someone sees me out with this fair-skinned man will they smirk and say, "I knew he always had it in him."

I am simply the product of my environment. I am no more or less Black or gay because of it.

One must only look through the personal ads in any urban periodical to see the proliferation of labels and categories in which we, as African-American gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered persons, place ourselves. I am becoming accustomed to labels: femme, fat, chubby, lipstick lesbian, college boy, flaming queen, diesel dyke; moreover, if one slips and makes the statement that he or she will be satisfied, in a relationship, with a partner who is merely devoted...well, no one believes you?

"Girl, what if he's rough trade?" And. "He doesn't make enough money." And "She thinks she's the shit." And.

On numerous occasions, I have felt that I would never meet anyone because most men can't get beyond my belly. Fat. Oreo. Femme. College Boy. Flaming Queen. Chubby. All labels, all painfully divisive...all serving as fences. I will stay in here. You stay out there. They are all dogs. They think they're better. I'll put up with his shit because I can't do any better. I am this; you are that.

The sadness lies in that we label others and then label ourselves, or accept the labels assigned to us by others. Fences. The same actions we decry the white lesbian and gay community for practicing are almost identical to the ones we practice on our gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered brother and sisters of color.

I must say that I simply... am. My worth and place in our community should not be decided on the fact that I like Othello better than Ma Rainey's Black Bottom or enjoy equally the works of Essex Hemphill and Walt Whitman.

One must realize that racists and homophobes, if struck with the notion to harm a gay person of color, are not going to pull out charts and decide, based on an individual's personality, appearance and demeanor, if he or she if fully Black or gay.

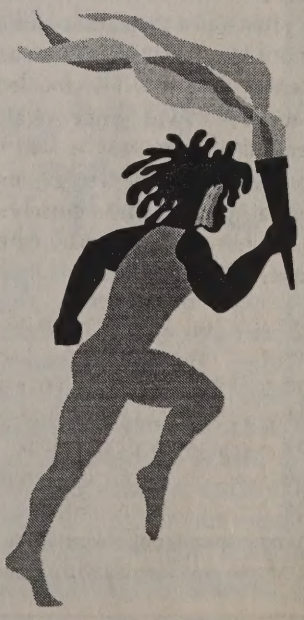
They will not go through our CD collections and compare the number of Broadway Musical Cast Recordings to acid jazz selections. They will not worry about whether he is a plumber or she is a doctor. They do not care about paychecks. They will see us as African-American and gay and will seek to do us harm.

The persons who deny us our rights, beat us down and even kill us do not give a damn about this system of caste we have created within our community. To them we simply are Black and gay. In even their eyes we are a community.

We are individuals, yet part of a whole.

If those who seek to harm us see no divisions in our community—why must we? Is it such a big step for us to move forward an begin to see ourselves as one?

An oreo...me? Humph!



The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

Life of Audre Lorde chronicled: The life and legacy of Audre Lorde, the late feminist poet and human rights activist, will be on display as a photo-documentary exhibition co-sponsored by Gerber/Hart Library and Archives and the University of Illinois at Chicago. The exhibit, called "Transcending Silence: The Life and Poetic Legacy of Audre Lorde," will run through April 5th at the Chicago Circle Center's A. Montgomery Ward Gallery. For more information contact Randy Snyder at (312) 338-5482.

Olympic City To Host Road Race. The site of 1996 Olympic Games events, Athens, GA, will also be the site of the AIDS Coalition of Northeast Georgia's Fifth Annual Show of Feet 5K Run, Walk, and Roll on May 25, 1996. The race begins at 8 AM at the Athens Regional Medical Center on Prince Avenue. The $10 pre registration fee includes a T-shirt. The late registration fee is $12. Medals will be awarded to top shirt you've ever seen. Medals will be awarded to top finishers in each age group. For more information, call Kerri Edwards at (706) 542-2437.

Cases of AIDS reported each year in Georgia are increasing fastest among women and African Americans, and also increasing faster in small towns and rural areas than in urban centers, according to Kathleen E. Toomey, MD., MPH, state epidemiologist and director of the Epidemiology and Prevention Branch of the Georgia Dept. of Human Resources Division of Public Health.

The report also shows that African Americans were 68% of all new cases reported in 1994, up from 57% in 1990. Much of this increase took place outside of metropolitan Atlanta. "This information is helping us direct our prevention and treatment programs to areas with the greatest need", says Toomey. "We are in the seconds year of a community planning, partnership with grassroots health activists, people who are HIV positive, and health professional from all over Georgia."

The World Is Watching! Help ensure a fair and accurate image of our community. GLAAD-Atlanta will host a Media Breakfast on May 9 to introduce local gay and lesbian community leaders and activists to the national and international media to help ensure fair coverage during the Olympics and Summer of 1996. Media professionals and reporters from national and global T.V., radio, magazines and newspapers, wire services will have the opportunity to explore issues of importance to the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered communities. Come to Mary Mac's Tearoom May 9th from 7:30–10:00 AM. For information, call 404-876-1398 or e-mail GLAAD ATL@aol.com.

North Carolina Mobilization '96 is a grassroots campaign led by African American lesbian activist Mandy Carter. We are dedicated to the certainty that Jesse Helms can be defeated! Our People of Color Committee is led by an African American bi woman. The group urges gay North Carolinians across the U.S. to "Come Back Home!" for NC Pride '96, June 7–9 in Winston Salem. African American LesBiGays will have a strong, visible presence at NC Pride this year and we're going to have FUN! while brainstorming how to defeat Helms this year! Call (919) 828-3311 for more information.

Lesbian Photo Reinstalled at Women's Rights Park. A

photo of a women holding a sign that reads "BLACK, LESBIAN, FEMINIST" which was removed from a display at Women's Rights National Historical Park on December 8, 1995, was reinstalled to it's original location on February 12, 1996 The photo which had been temporarily placed in a "closet," than moved to a less visible location in the museum, was part of a lobby display depicting women of all backgrounds, politics and agendas. Superintendent Joanne Hanley was responsible for removing the photo in what lesbians in the area are calling a homophobic act. The photo is the work of well-known photographer Bettye Lane, and is a straightforward documentary image. This was the only photo that had been removed.

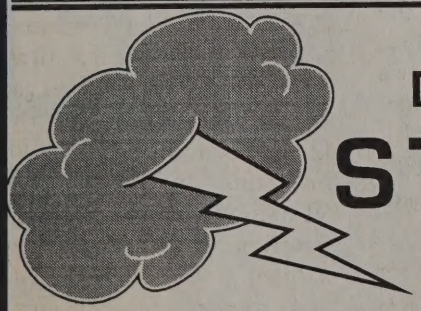
A Coke and A Smile. The Coca-Cola Company, one of Atlanta's largest employers and a highly visible international. presence in this Olympic year, recently extended it non-discrimination policy to include "sexual orientation." This significant step forward should be rewarded by a letter of thanks to the Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola, Roberto Goizueta. In your response, encourage to Mr. Goizueta to take the next step and extend health and other benefits to domestic partners of employees. Write to Mr. Goizueta at P.O. Drawer 1734, Atlanta, GA, 30301 ; to respond via the World Wide Web, go to http://www.coca-cola.com/co/equeries.html.

AIDS Education/Services for Minorities (AESM), a certified nonprofit community based IDS Service Organization (ASO) sponsored an Art Auction/ Banquet. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and Congressman John Lewis were guest speakers. All proceeds benefited AESM programs including the AESM House.

National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum to Honor Phil Wilson and Ruth Waters for "106 Years of Activism" The National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum will honor its founders, Phil Wilson and Ruth Waters at a gala event in Los Angeles on April 28. Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters will serve as Honorary Co-Chairs.

The event, titled "106 Years of Activism," honors Phil Wilson, who will retire this month as Director of Public Policy for AIDS Project LA and Ruth Waters, a widely known activist in the lesbian and gay community. Wilson celebrates his 40th birthday and Waters her 66th birthday this year.

The evening will include a silent auction, dinner and tribute at the Universal City Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles. For information call the Forum office in LA at (213) 964-7820 or in Washington at (202)736-3729.



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Blues in the Night

Jomandi Productions announces the Broadway hit of the late 70's, "Blues in the Night," as its final offering for the 17th Anniversary Mainstage Season running April 26–May 19, at the 14th Street Playhouse.

"Blues in the Night" uses the great blues and jazz songs of the 1920's and 30's to explore the lives of three women and a saloon singer in a cheap Chicago hotel during the course of a long memory-filled evening. The songs celebrate a great period and style of American music and explore the influences and roots of jazz as it grew from the Blues.

It once was said, "Blues is to jazz what yeast is to bread." The blues melodies of Bessie Smith, Jimmy Cox, Alberta Hunter and others are mixed and contrasted with the songs of Harold Arlen, Andy Razaf, Johnny Mercer and other greats of the jazz world to paint the full spectrum of the great musical form, starring Theresa Hightower.

"(T)he great blues and jazz songs of the 1920's and 30's (are used) to explore the lives of three women and a saloon singer in a cheap Chicago hotel during the course of a long memory-filled evening. "

For groups and information, call (404) 876-6346. For advance tickets, call Ticketmaster Arts Hotline at (404) 817-8700. The 14th Street Box Office opens April 15th, call (404) 733-4750. Tickets are $12–$25 and shows run Wednesday through Saturday, 8 PM, and Sundays at 3 PM.

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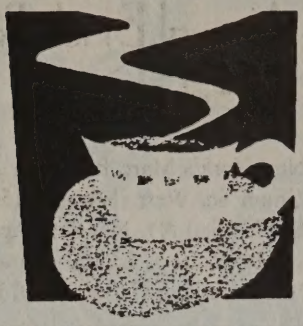

CONFERENCES

UJIMA

An institute for HIV prevention among gay and bisexual men of African Descent in the South April 25-27, 1996 Harvey Hotel Jackson, MS. for info cantact Raymond Dumas, Sr. (415) 356-8136

Keep Your Head To the Sky:

Queers of Color Coming Together, April 19, 1996, Ohio State Univerdity, Columbus. Contact: Diversity of Ohio, (614) 486-5664

XI International Conference on AIDS

Vancouver, Britiish Columbia, Canada, July 7-12, 1996. 12,000 to 15,000 expected to participate. Volunteer Hotline (604) 683-7781. For all other info call (604) 668-3225, Email-aids96@hivnet.ubc.ca

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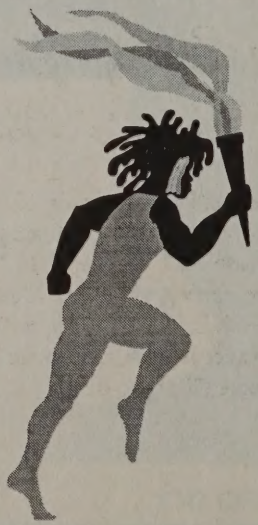


FESTIVALS

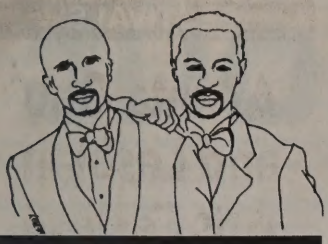
Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Arts Festival

Don't miss the hottest artists in Downtown Decatur April 11–14, 1996. Events includ Gallery Opening & Reception; Dianné Aldrich Company Striip; a presentation of *The Vicar's Wife* by David Mowers; *Sensuality* by Sonya Hemphill; *Late Night with David Lesbian*; Poetry Reading; and an Artist Market. Festival Passes: $20 available at Brushtrokes, Outwrite Books, Charis Books and More (cash or check only). Call the Info Line at 404/874-8710 for more information.

Washington D.C.'s

BLACK LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE WEEKEND

May 24-26, Friday May 24 - Black Pride Kickoff reception; Saturday May 25 Cultural Arts Festival, Memorial Vigil, Boat Ride; Sunday May 26 Main Event outdoor Festival; Package deal $65.00. Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Development, Inc. (202)722-4780, Email blgpd@aol.com.



FUNDRAISERS

Join Venus & Friends for a meet

Cynthia McKinney Bar•B•Q Fundraiser

Help send Cynthia back to D.C. as our Congresswoman! Minimum $25 contribution. Sunday April 14 from 5–8 PM at the Venus Office (616 Ormewood Avenue—call 404/622-8069 for directions/ reservations) Delicious food and a chance to affect the future of the country and your community—what else do you have to do on a Sunday afternoon? **BE THERE!**

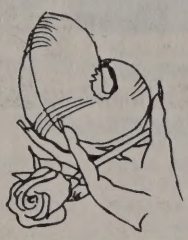
ENVISION EQUALITY

at the 1996 HRC Dinner/Dance at the Hyatt Regency Ballroom in Atlanta on Saturday, May 4, 1996. Enjoy cocktails, dinner and dancing while you meet friends. Bid on items at our Silent Auction. Special rates arranged with Hyatt Regency Atlanta; call 404-577-1234 for information. Honorary Chairperson Coretta Scott King. Featuring Dan Butler of *Frasier*, Chastity Bono, Sean Sasser and Elizabeth Birch, the Executive Director of HRC. For tickets or more information, call 770-840-6969.

MEETINGS

ALL PEOPLE OF COLOR GROUPS

Please meet at Kalo's Coffeehouse, 1248 Clairmont Road, Sat., April 13 at 2 PM to discuss plans for a multi-cultural float in the Pride Parade.



PARTIES

The Interstate Champagne Charity Ball

Pre-Ball Party, Fri, April 12 10-3, casual attire. Champagne Charity Ball Sat, April 13 10-3, semi-formal. Days Inn, 2700 NY Ave NE, Wash., D.C., $40.00, advance sales only. Contact Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

Annual Black & Gold Dance

New York's Marc Ballroom 27 Union Sq. West (between 15th & 17th Sts) NY, NY. Sat., April 27, 1996, 10-3, $35.00 contact Bess Knowlings (718) 992-9073

Atlanta - Brothers of 30 Something Special presents

Elements of Style

Pre-Easter Bunny Hop, Saturday April 6, 1996 10-3, $10.00 performances by Adode Muse and Enigma. Club Ultimate 4640 Washington Rd. College Park (404)305-9366

Aries Celebration Dance

Sisters of 30 Something Atlanta, Sat. April 13, 1996, 10-3 a.m, $7.00.

RETREATS

Awakening Brotherhood to our Rhythm & Culture

Black Gay Men's Retreat April 5-7, 19996, Boston, Mass. Sponsored by Brother II Brother. Contact Craig Cobb (617) 267-0849 ext 220

OUT & about

Writer/activist Sabrina Soujourner with award recipient Jeannett Williams of D.C.'s Black Lesbian Support Group.

National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Award recipients (l to r) Vallerie Wagner, Ta'Shia Asanti, Candace Boyce and Steve Wakefield.

The Atlanta contingent gathered for a caucas in Dallas during the National Black Gay and Leadership Conference.

Queen, co-chair of In The Life, Inc., and poet extraordinaire, greeted her royal subjects at a gala banquet in in Dallas.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Avenue. Sun. Worship 7:30 PM (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Prevention Education for Asians and Pacific Islanders—culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Contact Jennifer Kim (770) 936-0969 em: KCSC1996@aol.com

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

American Cancer Society—Lesbian and Gay Cancer Support Groups. (404) 841-0550. Meets 3rd Thursday of each month.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, GA 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Resource Line—A combined voicemail project of several Bay Area Bi Groups. (415) 703-7977.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black & White Men Together—POB 1334, Atl., GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta—P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, GA 30312. (404) 872-1097.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

BLUeS—Bronx Lesbians United in Sisterhood, Event Organization. (212) 330-9196

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Cinnamon Productions—Womyn of Color event organizers. (718) 994-0028.

Creation Woman—poets/artists & affiliates meet last Sun. each month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Fe*mail—a D.C. publication for Lesbians of Color. P.O. Box 75392, Washington, DC 20013. (202) 546-7040

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Community Organization Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlanta, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Georgia Equality Project—GEP, P.O. Box 78351, Atl, GA 30357-2351. (404) 662-4030

GLAAD—Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. (404) 873-2002.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—For Women of Color (404) 523-0228.

HRC—Human Rights Campaign. (770) 840-6969.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

North Carolina Mobilization '96—P.O. Box 28718, Raleigh, NC 28718. (918) 828-3311

our cousin's house—An African American AIDS Organization. P.O. Box 10709, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 758-0397.

ONYX/Chicago—Leather Social Club for Men of Color and their friends. 1340 W. Irving Park Road, Suite 188, Chicago IL 60613.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Pink Triangle Productions—Gay Female Entertainment Party Source. (770) 723-7292.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Pyramid Productions—Cultural Shows & Dances. (718) 622-5093.

Q-GLU—Queens Gays & Lesbians United. (718) 639-4951.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atl., GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. (212) 741-2247.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—POB 310, Atlanta, GA 30301. (404) 325-7321.

Shades of Brown—Professional Womyn/Men of Color. (212) 439-1024.

Shades of Ebony Connections—For Women of Color, Dallas, (214) 570-5795.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 350-9758.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

Stonewall Bar Association—Professional organization for attorneys, legal assistants and other related professions. P.O. Box 7708, Atl, GA 30357-0708. (770) 621-4663.

The ADODE MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—1108 Locust St., 1st Floor, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

Tres—Dance Parties for Womyn of Color. (718) 670-3643

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. (404) 892-0475 or (404) 373-8915 trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Woman's Monthly—Periodical calendar for woman's community. 1213 Morningside Dr., Silver Springs, MD 20904

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesbian party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.**Crossroads with Baldelie Jones**—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.**Sister Love, Sister's Time**—6 PM Thursdays**"Alternative Talk"**—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18 yo) Wed. eve. 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): 8:30-10:00. 1379 Tullie Rd.

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.

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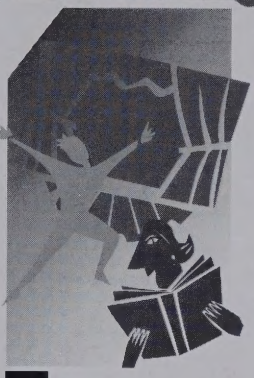

PERFORMANCE

April 11-14, 1996
Decatur, Georgia

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FESTIVAL EVENTS INCLUDE

- Gallery Opening & Reception (Thurs., Apr. 11)
- Dianné Aldrich Company Striip - NYC
- *The Vicar's Wife* by David Mowers - NYC
- *Sensuality* by Sonya Hemphill - Atl.
- *Late Night With David Lesbian*
- Poetry Reading
- Artist Market

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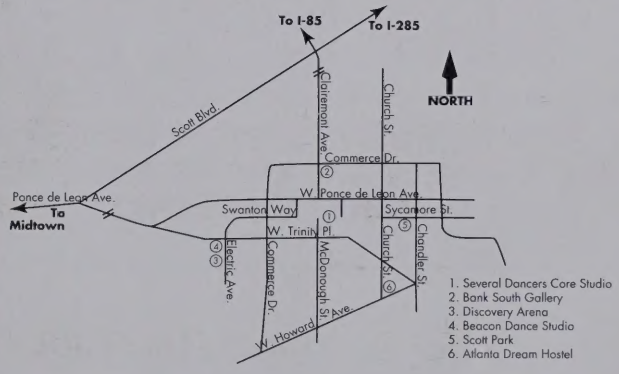
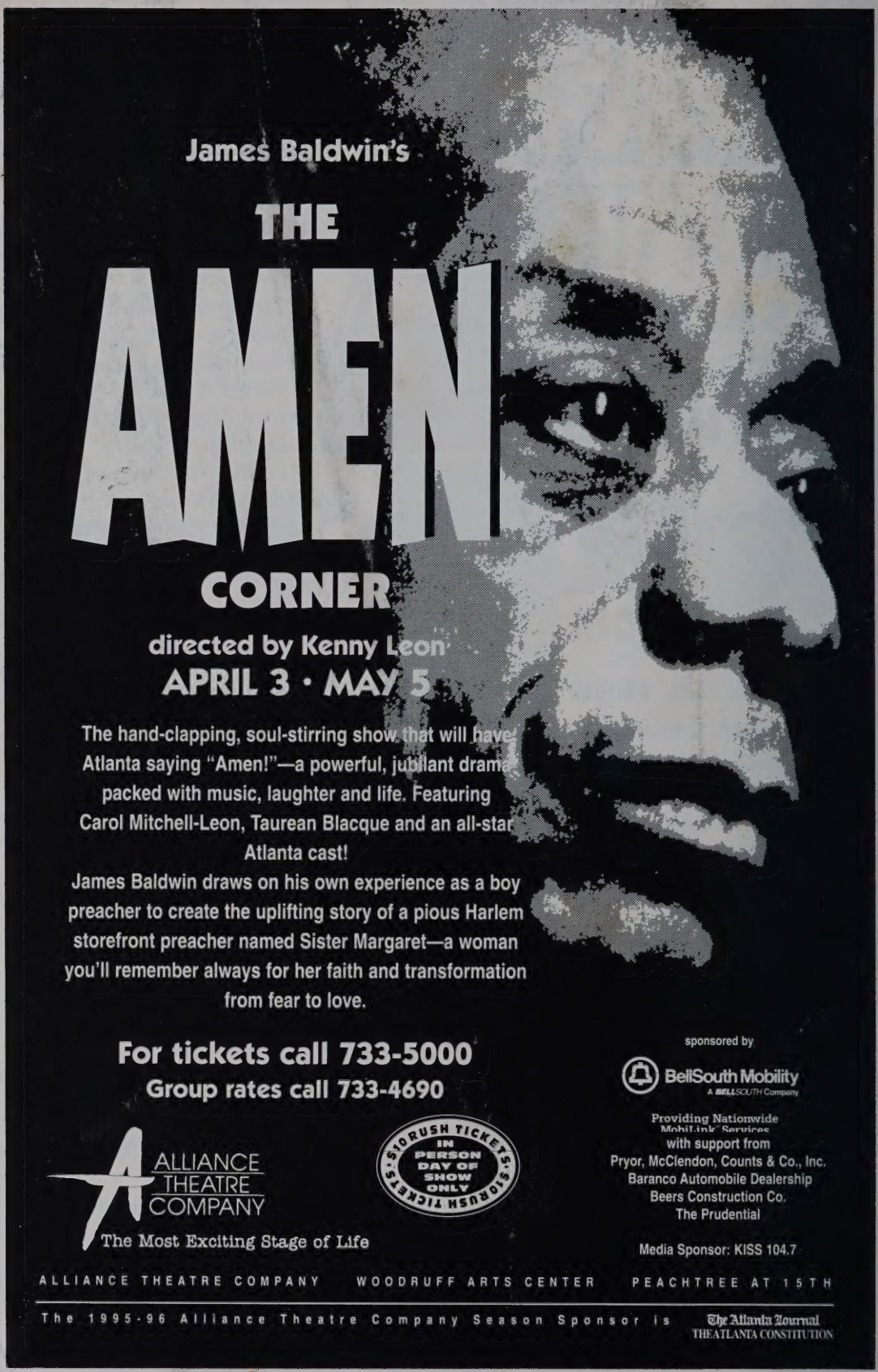
FESTIVAL MAP OF DOWNTOWN DECATUR





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